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Ethiopian Journalism and Ethics

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To
Fiori (Eminet Hailemarkos Ayalew), my cute Daughter
For all the joy with which you fill my life...



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Ethics Declaration

I declare that the enclosed work report is original research. All the sources that I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have not submitted the work or parts of the work for assessment or examination in any country of the world. The enclosed work is identical in form and content with the work assessed by the assessors.

EIDESSTATTLICHE ERKLÄRUNG

Ich, Worke Hailemarkos Ayalew, Matrikelnummer a0749672, erkläre hiermit an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig verfasst habe. Die aus fremden Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Gedanken sind als solche gemäß den Richtlinien wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten zitiert und durch Fußnoten gekennzeichnet. Diese vorliegende Arbeit wurde bisher weder in gleicher noch in ähnlicher Form einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt und auch noch nicht veröffentlicht.

Wien, im November 2011

Worke Hailemarkos Ayalew

Introduction

Historical background of the Ethiopian press

The History of the Ethiopian mass media can be categorized in five different stages. The first stage is the time where Ethiopia began to experience modern form of information transmission as it is technically called the press. It was at the end of the 19th century that the first press products were observed in the country. Chronologically speaking the first fully Amharic, the official language of the nation, weekly paper was named AEMRO, which is literally to mean the mind. However there was a hand written newspaper containing both Amharic and French, which was believed to be published before AEMRO, named Lesemaine d' Ethiopia.(Pankrest,1992). After these two publications till the outbreak of the Italian war in 1936 it was considered as a full boom period for the Ethiopian press. It was at this time that new printing equipments were imported from Europe. Fast developments of the press were also observed by both local and foreign languages. In 1936 broadcasting stations had also been established.

The second stage is where the country was in war with Italian forces. In this period the Italians banned Ethiopian press and replaced them by their own publications. However Ethiopian government officials and editors of the domestic publications who were forced to live in exile continued to publish newspapers that used to be distributed in the country through various hidden ways.

The third stage was the revival of the press after the Italian forces got defeated and left the country. During this time the government was fully involved in repairing destroyed publishing and broadcasting equipments in a short period of time. The following years witnessed a fast development of the press and the broadcast media. Television for the first time in the country's history was also introduced at this period. Unfortunately this was also the time (since 1940) where for the first time institutionalized form of control over the mass media was put in place. The country's constitution and the penal and civil codes were made to include articles that limit the activities of the mass media in a way that would be serving the interest of the ruling class. Even though there were both private and public presses in the country during this third stage of the mass media development, it was mainly characterized by a centrally controlled media by the government. Especially during the 1960s where there were growing social discontent caused by the worsening economic situation and lack of social reforms, censorship was highly intensified. This stage has two faces. The first face is where the press was working in a relatively free environment during the first few years after the defeat of the Italian army. And the second face is where censorship is highly intensified toward the end of the stage, which is the start of the revolution that ended the Feudalists era in the country.

The fourth stage starts at the 1974 revolution that brought a change of government and political ideology which led to a socialist system in the country. In this period the entire press fell in the hands of the government. Private publishers were suspended. The mass media were used fully for propaganda aims until the government is overthrown in 1991 which marks the beginning of

the fifth stage. The period in the fourth stage could be considered as the time where the free press was under a total oppression.

The fifth stage covers the time from 1991 up to today. In this period private publishers are allowed to publish and censorship is officially forbidden by law. Recently, in 2006 the government licensed two private radio broadcasters though television is not yet allowed for private broadcasters. An important land mark at this period is the 2005 controversial election. Following the controversy over the election results the government suspended many private publications and arrested journalists to release them after two years in jail in 2007. This time has also witnessed a new press law which is highly criticized by journalists in the country and international press freedom advocates. This stage could be seen as the time for a polarized media environment where the private press is blamed for favoring opposition views while the state owned press serving the ruling party's mere interest.

According to a print media Journal of the Ethiopian Press Organization, currently there are more than 95 newspapers, among them 76 are private, 8 are government and 5 of them belong to political parties. Television is still controlled by the state. Two private F.M. radio stations are currently working in addition to the existing national and regional state owned broadcasters. Shortwave radio broadcasting is still not allowed for the private sector.

Statement of the problem

The Ethiopian press has been widely criticised by politicians, business people, the elite and scholars of the area for being highly polarized and extremely biased. The criticism covers nearly every journalism practice across the board that are interested in covering serious issues like political reporting. On the one hand, the public press has been accused of underreporting or totally ignoring issues and events which may expose government wrong doings and denying access to oppositions' views. On the other hand the private press has been labelled as a blind supporter and a mouth piece of the opposition views against the government.

Scholars of the area who conducted a scientific research concerning the issue have also proved the assertion to be true. For instance, Yosef (2006), Markos (2006) and Hailemarkos (2006) found out that both the public and the private press covered the 2005 national election in a biased and unethical manner. According to their results, the public media remained an ardent supporter of the ruling party and the private press served the opposition. They did so by unethically choosing a certain story over the other, by unproportionally allocating space for stories, by choosing angles to relate stories through the headlines in a manner that could serve their sides and by making use of other techniques which help them favour their chosen sides.

These unethical practices have sometimes been criticised from within the journalists themselves. For instance Tamrat (2005) and Shimelis (1998) described the press as 'militant journalism' and 'vendetta journalism' respectively.

The above two phrases were used in their description to express the country's journalism of hatred, revenge and dislike against one another in the news. The conflict is basically between the ruling class and the opposition camps. False accusations, abusive languages, and painting bad pictures by making use of sarcastic reporting were among the points which are associated with the Ethiopian press. Little improvements that were witnessed over the years before the 2005 elections have been overwhelmed by polarized and extremely biased reporting on the run up to the controversial Election Day and following the announcement of the results until the closure of the major private papers. The government press has become even more explicit in serving the ruling party up to today.

There are different assumptions that have been forwarded as reasons for the prevalence of unethical journalism in the country. Some believe that lack of professional training at the heart of the problem. Others think Political parties' interference is fuelling it. In the research conducted to find out why public broadcaster, Ethiopian television is covering elections unethically, Solomon, A. (2006) indicated that internalized fear of punishment and government interference are the root causes journalists are claiming to defend their unethical reporting. But this study has focused only on the public media and no research so far has been done to find out the reasons as to why ethics is not governing the Ethiopian private media which has a relative freedom to exercise ethical journalism than the officially controlled public media.

The researcher believes that the reasons as to why ethics is being consistently violated by the country's media should be addressed to find a better solution for improved journalism that can serve the society's effort to realize democracy and achieve sustainable development. In order to locate the core reasons for the problem identifying the way media ethics is perceived by journalists (the major stake holders in the sector) and assessing how ethical decisions are made and what sort of factors are influencing the process could help a lot. Therefore the researcher is aiming at examining the existing knowledge, perception, ethical decision making and influential factors in the process of media ethics among Ethiopian journalists working both from within the country and from abroad. By doing so the researcher believes that foundations for the real solutions as to how to improve the country's journalism ethical practices could be laid.

Theoretical Framework

The issue of media ethics can be discussed in various ways depending on the context the media is functioning. But with all this variations, common features among them do exist since they all are used to shape journalism practices in line with societal interests.

For instance, Steele.R and Black.J (1999) were able to high light and list common features of various American codes of ethics. They believe that ethical codes should be able to set trends that inform routines. A good newspaper code promotes ethical thought and behavior within the newspaper, showing newcomers where the landmines are and reminding veterans of the newsroom's values and norms. It also justifies journalists' activities to the public at large, especially during times of diminished credibility and intensified public scrutiny.

A code of ethics, according to Steel and Black (1999, 32), which seeks to serve the public at large, has the following features:

- It stands for the journalistic values of truth, honesty, courage, fairness, compassion, balance, independence, credibility, and diversity.
- It seeks the truth and reports it as fully as possible under deadline pressures, striving for clean, concise, complete reporting.
- It seeks out and disseminates competing perspectives without being unduly influenced by those who would use their power or position.
- It seeks to give a voice to the voiceless.
- It seeks to treat sources, subjects, and colleagues as people deserving our respect, not merely as a means to our journalistic ends.
- It seeks to inform our readers and to reflect fairly the breadth of our community.
- Its first obligation is to our credibility -- that is, to the public at large and not to any other person, business, or special interest. Employees should avoid any activity that would impair their integrity or jeopardize readers' trust in us.

Many of the African codes of ethics do also share the values and principles listed above. On the one hand the codes are mainly informed by the dominant western view of journalism. On the other hand however it cannot be argued that they are simply imposed. It is because there seems to be no as such significant controversy among African journalists in accepting these values and principles. In other words these values tend to already exist in the African culture too.¹ Many of the codes of conducts in Africa stated writing, publishing or reporting fairly and accurately in a balanced way to be an important value in journalism practices. These same codes do also advice journalists to stay away from stories with a tendency of encouraging and glorifying social evils, instigating wars and fuelling hatred among the society. Avoiding sensational and provocative headlines out of the stories context are also advised in many codes including Africans.

Sensationalism is mainly inherent in stories but a journalist must guard against highlighting incidents out of context, either in headlines or in reportage/narration.

¹ If you want to see various codes of conducts of African countries for further reading you can see the link below. It provides codes of conducts from around the world.
<http://www.journalism.co.za/codes-of-ethics-and-guidelines.html> Retrieved on the 1st of June 2011.

In general accuracy, fairness, balance, interpretation and analysis of facts and keeping integrity as common features in various codes of ethics will give theoretical framework of this study. This research uses the following schools of philosophic thought commonly categorized as the deontological, teleological perspectives of approaches to ethics as it its framework for deciding the ethical approaches used in the Ethiopian Journalism practices. The virtue oriented approach to ethics has also been used as a theoretical framework to look into Ethiopian journalism ethics approaches.

The deontologists' theory main focus is relying on duties to make the right decisions. In other words what matters in the deontologists' perspective is not the consequence of an action. It rather focuses on what individuals ought to do. There are of course various perspectives within the deontological view on what the duties should be. (Breit 2004, 210).Some believe duties to god, duties to oneself and duties to others should govern the idea of duties to be followed for the right decisions. (Harrison and Fieser in Breit (2004), 211). Others believe on the notion of social contract to determine the duties that informs decisions. (Chadwick and Stockwell in Breit (2004, 212).Immanuel Kant gives it to the motive of the doer of the action to determine the duties that govern the right choices. Further detail discussion on these issues will be in Chapter two.

On the contrary the teleological view determines the right of an action on the bases of its consequences. This perspective emphasizes on maintaining values that are determined by their good end results. (Breit 2004, 213) The virtue oriented ethical approaches on the other hand are more concerned on individual virtuous characters and behaviors in determining to have ethical practices. As the name tells it developing virtuous personality has been taken as a determinant factor for ethical behavior. Further discussion on the matter of theoretical perspectives of ethical approaches is in chapter two.

Research Questions

This research addresses the following research questions;

- 1 What are the values and principles of Ethiopian journalists?
- 2 What do Ethiopian journalists think as their professional role?
- 3 How do they describe the current practices of journalism in Ethiopia in terms of media ethics?
- 4 What are their references to determine ethical behaviors? Do they have their own ethical codes?
- 5 If there are their own institutional codes, what are the common features and where do they differ?
- 6 What are their approaches to journalism ethics and how do they want to achieve it?

7 What are the factors that influence ethical journalism in the country and how do the journalists describe them?

The above research questions are developed in the researcher's assumption that getting answers for the questions listed would help have a comprehensive picture in order to understand the interplay between Ethiopian journalists and journalism ethics. In other words the how and why of Ethiopian journalists treatment of journalism ethics would be revealed. This in effect would lead to lay the foundation in finding solutions for the betterment of ethical journalism in the country.

The power of the free media to mould public opinion that keeps democracy turning can only be achieved through ethical reporting. And to effectively put it in place contextual perception and understanding of features of media ethics like; fairness, accuracy, balance, impartiality and other related issues including appropriate analysis and interpretation of facts to the benefit of objective and comprehensive understanding of facts by the society would be expected to exist in the mind of the main actors, journalists. Especially in countries like Ethiopia where democracy is yet at its infant stage, tools like journalism are supposed to contribute a lot in their unique nature of reaching the masses. Therefore it would be a reasonable concern to think about ethical journalism practices to develop in the nation.

The dominant practices of unethical journalism has also been assumed by the researcher as a factor affecting journalists' perception and understanding of the concept of media ethics. It seems that there is a tendency of taking the trend of unethical journalism practices in the country for granted and probably sees it as normal and right thing to do.

General Objectives

The study will be conducted with the general objectives of;

- 1 Identifying the socio-demographic background and education of journalists;
- 2 Discovering the professional role and ethics orientation of journalists reporting in the Ethiopian news media from their points of view;
- 3 Identifying factors determining the perception and understanding of the concept of media ethics by the journalists,
- 4 Identifying some similarities and differences that may arise from demographical, educational, and journalism experience backgrounds

Specific Objectives

The study attempts to find;

- 1 the attitude of journalists toward journalism as a profession;

- 2 the perception of journalists in Ethiopia on the idea of media ethics or ethical reporting;
- 3 factors that influence the way journalists perceive ethics
- 4 ethical values that are upheld by the Ethiopian media,
- 5 their own self assessment of ethical performances of the journalists working for the Ethiopian media both from the domestic press and from abroad,
- 6 instruments used by each media house to verify ethical reporting,
- 7 the demographic profile of Ethiopian journalists,
- 8 the difference between male and female journalists, on their professional role and ethics perceptions, and
- 9 demographic and educational background differences on the perception of media ethics

Significance of the Study

This research project attempts to find out the values and principles of ethical journalism among Ethiopian journalists. As a result, it lays the foundation for contextual improvement of ethical journalism in Ethiopia which if not possible might be a danger to draw back every effort being made to mature the country's infant democratization process. To the researcher's knowledge no research so far has been conducted to assess journalism ethics from the point of view of the journalists themselves. This would lead to ignoring the major actors of the profession in every effort being made to give effect to ethical journalism in the country. This research would therefore be a big contribution in resolving the already rampant problem of ethical journalism in the country. It also is the appropriate base to research attempts in the area of professionalism in journalism and some other related initiative in the future. The findings may serve as a springboard to study the sociological aspects of journalists in comparative approach, which have never been attempted in Ethiopia so far.

Research Methodology

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research strategy is employed with structured questionnaire composed of close-ended and open ended questions together with an in depth interview qualitative questions for collecting primary data. Selected case stories containing conflicting values and principles of ethical journalism were also administered in order to further investigate decision methods and processes of daily journalism practices. Grounded theory approach is been followed in the whole process of data gathering and analyses with an aim of finding the appropriate theoretical explanation of the problem under investigation by grounding the analyses to the data gathered. Further explanation of the methodology is in chapter three. The secondary data that are meant for supplementing the analyses were gathered from books, journals, online journals, workshop papers, internet and other electronic media. In addition various interviews of Ethiopian journalists broadcasted by various media outlets and meeting

records concerning matters of ethics and journalism practices are used to supplement the other data.

Population of the study and its setting

This study relied on primary data from the survey of Ethiopian journalists working in both government and private media and the in depth interview conducted with journalists who are at a decision making levels for the final product of their respective institutions, like editors and editor in chiefs. Journalists who were jailed and released recently after the 2005 controversial national election, though they were not at a decision making status, were also included in the in depth interview since they have played a significant role in the country's journalism.

Mass media outlets which are often publishing political and other serious issues were taken and their journalists were subjects of the study. The media outlets that mainly focus on covering political stories were taken as subjects of this research for the simple reason that controversy over media ethics largely is on such papers,

The researcher used all journalists as subjects of the study for the survey because the total number of journalists in the country and abroad is below 200. The indicators which are established to collect primary data for this study were based on the theoretical frames developed by Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) in Brhanu (2007). These frames are developed to measure professionalism in journalism, such as perception of professional roles, ethical judgment, aspects of job and societal image.

In addition the items established by Menanteau (1967) in Brahanu (2007) to measure professional orientation of Chilean journalists such as, attitude to journalism education, participation in professional organization, motivation, commitment and identification of oneself with journalism and attitude of motivating ones child to join journalism will be used in this study too ,with some adaptation to the Ethiopian context. Further details on the methodology are in chapter three.

Chapter One

Review of Related Literature

Brief Description of the Mass Media

In this section, I just want to briefly explain what I mean by the mass media within the context of investigating media ethics in Ethiopia.

Mass media refers to a section of media which is meant for reaching a large number of audiences. The term was coined around 1920 following the advent of radio networks, newspapers and magazines. As the technological advancement is moving forward, the concept of mass media has also developed and now it includes television, the internet and other media which are intended for reaching a large number of audiences. There is also a kind of argument which tries to put medium like telephones under the category of the mass media that sometimes make it difficult to have a clear cut and simple definition of the mass media.

Though media like books, newspapers, magazines, and recordings, radio movies, television and the internet that could reach a large number of audiences are still included in the idea of mass media, the focus of this paper will be on radio, television, newspapers and the internet forms of the mass media which are basically focusing on reporting and dissemination of news events for larger audiences, or to put it simply on those media working on journalism. Here we can interchangeably use the term news media in place of the mass media for the sake of avoiding confusion of terms. The term news media basically refers to those segments of the media which employ journalists to disseminate news articles

The Mass Media and its Effects

I am investigating media ethics in the assumption that the media has its own impact on its consumers. And it is in the understanding of the impact it could possibly have on its clients that media ethics has been one of the major areas of focus in issues related to the mass media and its performance. It is a controversial matter to prove media effects. There are views that give very little effect for the media to have on its audience. On the contrary there are views that believe on the huge media effect. Talking of the news media it is mostly its impact on shaping opinions, attitudes and behaviour of people that has been raised with regard to media effects. Though it is a controversial matter the extent to which the mass media can have an impact on its audience it seems reasonable to say that there is a universal understanding of it to have its own contribution for the development of opinion, attitude and behaviour of people. The following discussion was directly taken from White.S, Oates.S and McAllister.I (2005) for I found it a good way of explaining the trends in the thinking of the effects of the mass media.

‘An early literature, much impressed by the success of the Nazis and their ‘big lie’, had suggested that the role of the media was normally decisive in the shaping of political attitudes and values. The development of mass communications appeared to have placed

a new and immensely powerful instrument in the hands of governments and anyone who could afford to advertise; audiences, it seemed, were an undifferentiated mass, easily manipulated by the messages they received from press, radio and particularly television. But as empirical research developed, it soon became apparent that the effects of mass communications had been greatly exaggerated, or at least oversimplified. The work of Berelson in the United States, for instance, found that ordinary people chose forms of communication that were 'congenial to their predispositions', and took decisions that were 'in line with their latent attitudes'. Readers and viewers, it became clear, were more than passive recipients: they interpreted what they saw in relation to their own experience, and the result was normally to reinforce their predispositions, rather than to change them. Klapper, in an influential review, pointed to the measure of agreement that had been reached on the importance of the 'nexus of mediating factors' that stood between the media and their audiences; some, indeed, went so far as to suggest that it was the 'public that manipulated the media', not the reverse. More recent approaches have avoided either extreme, but as television moved into a dominant position on national and international communication markets there has been something of a 'return to the concept of powerful mass media'. This newer literature drew attention, not just to short-term changes in opinion, but to the shaping of a 'climate of political action' in which particular issues were given national prominence, which then 'set the agenda' for policy makers as well as the public at large. The agenda-setting literature tended more often to support the view that it was the media agenda that had 'cause[d] the public agenda', rather than the reverse. This newer literature made use of a wider range of methodologies, including experimental and time-series analysis, which appeared to offer still more conclusive evidence that television was likely to influence electoral choices, particularly by defining the issues on which voters placed the greatest priority. It was certainly unusual to 'convert' the mass public to an entirely different set of values, but agenda-setting in various forms was 'pervasive', and television news appeared to be particularly important in establishing the hierarchy of issues against which parties and candidates for public office were judged by their respective electorates.'

White.S, Oates.S and McAllister.I (2005, 193)

Agner Fog (2004, 2) has also to say the following which could strengthen the above mentioned assertions of the recent trend of thinking the effect of the mass media. Fog said 'the most important democratic functions that we can expect the media to serve are listed in an often-cited article by Gurevitch and Blumler (1990). These functions include surveillance of socio-political developments, identifying the most relevant issues, providing a platform for debate across a diverse range of views, holding officials to account for the way they exercise power, provide incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved in the political process, and resist efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence.' Fog.A. (2004, 2). It does seem

to be logical to reconsider the idea of the powerful mass media having in mind that the media have got all the above listed roles.

The widely discussed roles of the media which have now become cliché; informing, educating and entertaining its audience as the basic role of the mass media can also be taken as a frame work to understand the media effects. Its role as voice for the voiceless does also give it a significant place in the discussion of media effects. Karen Sanders (2004, 161) list of good aims for journalism can also add up to the discussion of the role of the media. Provision of information, scrutinizing of the powerful, providing a voice for all sectors of the society and revealing of injustice are on Sander's list.

It could also help have a comprehensive picture if seen from the output perspective regarding its impact on opinion and attitude. For instance the mass media brought news stories from different parts of the world and make its audience expose to it. And in turn the informed and exposed audience could possibly influence government policies on the matter. For instance it was witnessed in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack in the US that people's opinion were shaped by the mass media coverage that associates Osama Biladen and its accomplices with the attack As a result a massive support for the war in Iraq has been obtained which in the end raised lots of controversies.

In another example Yuki Sampei and Midori Aoyagi-Usui (2008) have indicated that mass media coverage influenced people opinion on matters of environmental concerns in the study they conducted on Japan media and its influence on awareness of environmental concerns. The agenda setting role has also been a widely accepted role of the mass media. McCombs (unknown) argued that;

“The power of media to set a nation's agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well-documented influence. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. Newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news – lead story on page one, other front page display, large headlines, etc. Television news also offers numerous cues about salience – the opening story on the newscast, length of time devoted to the story, etc. These cues repeated day after day effectively communicate the importance of each topic. In other words, the news media can set the agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms.” Maxwell McCombs (unknown, 2)

But it should be noted that people are not passive recipients of agendas set by the mass media. The level of impact the agendas could have on the audiences largely depend on the relevance and the uncertainty level attached to the matter by the audience.

The mass media has also an influence on perceptions of people on themselves. In conformity with this assertion, a study conducted in the United States to assess the influence of the mass media on adolescents have found out that consumers of the mass media could be influenced by it on their perception of their body and self images. (Benjile, 2006)

Though the controversy on the effect the media still persists, its importance in terms of providing audiences with necessary information is undeniable. To put it in Karen Sander's (2004, 9) words the media 'help create the map by which we understand the world beyond our immediate purview and by which we situate our fears, desires and aspirations.' Therefore it would be wise to be concerned on the mishandling of the mass media. That is why media ethics has always been at the centre of every initiative to make a better use of it. Accuracy, honesty, truth, objectivity, fairness, balance, respect for autonomy of ordinary people, explaining what their reports mean and how it fits into the present and the past happenings and others are required as part of media ethics, particularly journalism ethics in recognition of the media's role in originating and circulating of information that are supposed to help develop society. (Bagdikian, 1997) Especially the ethical elements in the news media are believed to have enormous role in the democratic processes of a nation. (Andrew Belsey, 1998)

The Ethiopian Mass Media and its role in History Briefly

The Ethiopian press, specially the private press, can be considered as an infant press. It is within the last two decades that the private press has begun enjoying its freedom when the Derg regime was overthrown by today's ruling party EPRDF. In fact during the era of Emperor Menlik the II (1844-1913) there was a newspaper entitled *Lesemaine d' Ethiopia* (1905–1911) which is believed to be the first Amharic & French newspaper in the history of Ethiopia. Following it another newspaper named *Aimro* (1902-1903) more modern in fulfilling the requirements of a complete newspaper, had been on print. (Hailemarkos, 2006) In fact there are some historical evidences which suggest the handwritten sheet produced by Blatta Gebre Egziabhere around 1900 probably preceded both *Le Semeur d'Ethiopie* and *Aimero* and may therefore be considered the first Amharic newspaper. (Pankrest 1992, Sophia, 2006). When the Italian Fascist invaded Ethiopia the domestic press totally collapsed. Even after the Italian aggressors got defeated and forced to go out of the country the private press stayed out of the business. Until the EPRDF took power in 1991, it is only government newspapers, which are allowed to be printed and distributed all over the country.

In the recent two decades history of Ethiopian private press a number of newspapers and magazines begun to get published. According to a print media Journal of the Ethiopian Press Organization, there are more than 95 newspapers, among them 76 are private, 8 are government and 5 of them belong to political parties. Concerning the ownership of the private press, Shimelis Bonsa's survey of the private press in Ethiopia indicated that "... Newspapers were, in most cases, owned, run and controlled by people for whom the paper was a source of livelihood, a profit-generating venture and/or a political instrument (Shimelis, 2000:26).

In the early stage of the press politics was the dominant issue in contents of the press, which took much of the pages of the newspapers. Political coverage still remains to be dominant in many of the private press. But there are also issues, which are getting interests of the media. Even though more than half of the private papers cover mainly the political aspects of the country, there are some 14 religious, 10 sport, 5 love and gender, 3 culture and art, 8 business and 1 children newspapers.

Radio came into the country only 14 years after the introduction of this important technology to the world in 1933 while Television broadcasting begun in the early 1960s (Ministry of Information, 2004). The Ethiopian radio, the most widely accessed medium in the country, has 100% broadcasting coverage across the country with short wave, and 70% with medium wave. Ethiopian television has 47% nationwide coverage. (Ministry of Information 2003:491).

The national public broadcasters dominate the broadcast industry in Ethiopia. Over the recent decades the usage of the internet has been growing. The television sector is still owned by the state. But there are some improvements on the radio broadcasts for there are now two FM private radio stations in service.

Pertaining to their content strong criticisms has been forwarded from various sections of the society. The criticisms mainly focus on their weakness on content selection and presentation. Especially those which prioritize political issues are highly blamed for their unbalanced and exaggerated reports. To put it differently the ethicality of their journalism is questioned. Professional codes are not yet widely used. (Brook Hailu, 2000). The Ethiopian mass media served the interest of government officials and were used as a tool for propaganda purposes for the significant part of its history. The demand for varied and diversified Ethiopian press has got an answer, though it was not to the extent it was needed and believed to be, after the fall of the military regime in 1974. Especially the private presses flourished since then until an interruption that occurred following the controversy in the 2005 election which led to the imprisonment of many journalists. Following the release of the journalists in 2007, it seems the private press is on a comeback. But still many of the journalists do not seem comfortable to get back to work. The controversy over the new press law and some other legal measures that concerns activities of the press taken by the government is growing from time to time. On the one hand the government accuses the private press of practicing irresponsible journalism which can hinder the development and democratization processes of the country. On the other side, members of the private press blame the government for suppressing freedom of expression for the sake of silencing the press from exposing the wrong doings of it. (Hailemarkos,2005 and Meron,2005)

Media Ethics

Ethics in its general sense is the study of grounds and principles of right and wrong human behaviour. Seen from this perspective media ethics can be explained as grounds and principles for identifying the right and wrong activities of the media. To narrow it down for the purpose of this study, it is the grounds and the principles that are used by journalists to identify what is right and what is wrong in their professional activities are said to be journalism ethics.

We can take three basic theoretical views to understand media ethics further. For Immanuel Kant and for others who has the same views with this renowned philosopher of the 18th century, it is the relationship of actions and practical reasons that are meant to be Ethics (Breit, 2004). For David (1711-1766) as it is quoted by Sanders (2004) it is exploration of emotion, sympathy and motive. And for Aristotle it pertains to characters, virtue and moral training. Similarly MacDonald and Petheram (1998) see media ethics as a question that asks whether the journalist handle their professional activities in a morally virtuous way. It is a question that asks the existence of honest reporting, fearless comment and holding fast to independence. To put it differently it is about truth telling. Truth telling about significant contemporary events is an internal and constitutive end of journalism. Gordon .A, David. J and Michael.K (1999) have also used questions like; what should a journalist consider to publish or broadcast, or disseminate, how much of it should be published and which of the parts should be omitted to explain the concepts of media ethics

Ethics is believed to be an important of journalism practices for the profession has an agreed power of at least disseminating information for a large population size which can impact its audience in various ways. The celebrated phrase quoted by Sanders (2004, 29) ‘power without responsibility’ referring to the media could explain the importance of ethics in a certain way. It is the role of the news media to provide the public with information that they need to actively participate in a democracy and other activities of the world they are living in which gives the conceptual foundations of ethical journalism. It is ethics which can fill the gap and make the media a responsible powerful instrument for human kind. Special privileges for the mass media could only be justified with the existence of ethical practices. Otherwise these privileges like freedom of expressions could be used to serve as a cover for promoting one’s own private agenda and hidden motives in the name of public right and benefit.

The trend we are witnessing in the development of codes of ethics and other instruments of self regulating ethical practices by many media houses around the world speaks volume about the possible realization of ethical practices in journalism. These ethical concerns are reflections of recognition given to the importance of making journalism practices committed to thoughtful decisions among alternatives. (Andrew Belsey, 1998)

There might be varied ways of achieving ethics. Some gives emphasis on outlined duties so that ethical decisions are made on the basis of it.(Deontologists).Others emphasize on the consequences of actions in order to choose the ethical from the unethical.(Consequentialists) and

the rest thinks good character at the centre of ethical decisions (Virtue ethics). However there are varied ways of approaching ethical practices. It looks a universally accepted fact that ethics benefits both the profession itself and the public. The public could gain from ethical journalism which many agreed to have it for the better development of a nation. The profession benefits from it in ensuring credibility of its audience.

Ethiopian Media and Ethics

This section is a discussion on the research works conducted so far concerning ethical journalism and the Ethiopian mass media. It can be said that there were very few research works done in the area of journalism in general since there were no academic or other research institutes that focus on the sector. The opening of a school of journalism and communication science at Addis Ababa University since 2004 has improved the situation and is opening various opportunities for the development of researches in the area of journalism.

Many of the existing research works in the area of journalism and ethics in the country are related to the country's controversial national election in 2005. Ethical performances of the country's mass media during this period were the dominant topic of investigation. Hailegebriel (2006) assessed the ethicality of the daily public newspaper named Ethiopian Herald, during the 2005 election and reached to a conclusion that gross ethical principles violation was observed. According to his findings the paper was highly biased and unfairly favoring the ruling party over the opposition groups. In addition he substantiated his findings by including journalists working for the paper under investigation who admitted that they know they are doing journalism unethically. The reasons for doing so are the media managers' direct and/or indirect imposition of censorship on the works of the journalists. In other words because the editors are mostly affiliated with the ruling party which has all the instruments to control public press, decides to publish stories that favor only the ruling party. Hailegebriel recommended establishments of press councils and developments of codes of ethics on the side of the journalists and lifting any sort of interference and censorships from the part of the government in order to see a better and ethical public press in the country.

Getachew Dibaba (2006) has seen ethics from the perspectives of source and story selection. In his specific study on Ethiopian Television (ETV) he found out that sources for a story are dominantly used from the government in a way it denied views and perspectives of others sectors of the nation though the station as a public owned station would have been the interests of all sectors of the society. According to his findings contents of stories that could get coverage by the station are mainly selected for the simple fact that they can portray the government positively. The journalists working for this media do intentionally or unintentionally, censor themselves in making sure that their stories make the ruling class happy. He concluded that the Ethiopian Public is denied of its right to access to diversified views and to its own voices as a result of gross violation of ethical journalism in the public owned Ethiopian Television (ETV). Markos Mekuria (2006) does also share the same views. He investigated the private press coverage of the

2005 election in the nation and reached to the same conclusion that there were unbalanced and unfair news reports favoring either the ruling or the opposition camps. To take some words from his paper, He said ‘newspapers (Addis Zemen and the Reporter) coverage of the May 2005 election in Ethiopia were considerably unfair and imbalanced in the space, prominence and visibility given to candidates and political parties running for seat in the government` Markos (2006, 50). He did also indicate that the readers of the two papers have only one in six chance of getting fair and balanced information from their election coverage.

Simret Yasabu (2006) investigated the post election period performance of the Ethiopian press and reached to a conclusion that the press was biased either against or for the actors in the 2005 election of the nation. She attributed the causes of biased reporting to the differences of ownership of the papers in the country. For instance, as she indicated, due to ownership differences sources for a story were selected in order to fit the organizational interests as opposed to professional standards. Her findings could be supported by the ownership landscape of the press for a long period of time since ²1991 as it was indicated by Shimelis Bonsa (2000) He stated that ‘... Newspapers were, in most cases, owned, run and controlled by people for whom the paper was a source of livelihood, a profit-generating venture and/or a political instrument` (Shimelis 2000, 26).

The way stories are framed, headlines are made, stories are placed, sources are selected and amount of spaces are given are among other factors that have been used by researchers in order to measure the ethicality of the press in Ethiopia especially during the election time (Simret (2006), Hailemarkos (2006), Markos (2006), Yosef (2006)

In addition to the impact of ownership on professional performances of journalism in Ethiopia, Solomon Alemu (2006) indicated that direct and/or indirect censorship was causing unethical practices. Specially in the Ethiopian television ,according to his findings, ‘direct censorship is practiced through assigning faithful party members, providing guidelines or directives to the journalists and directly reviewing the contents of the news stories’ (Solomon.2006,32). In addition, self censorship is done by journalists by toning up and down politically sensitive stories according to the interests of the ruling party. Journalists were also observed by Solomon’s research when trying to find ways to avoid from being assigned to cover politically sensitive stories. This was done for fear of being unethical without their will just to secure their job. Working for the system for years have also caused an internalized self censorship which avoids stories that might not be liked by the ruling party.

² It was after the fall of the Derg regime in 1991 that the private press in Ethiopia began to work under a constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression. specially the print sector has flourished since then till the aftermath of the controversial 2005 election where many members of the press went to jail to be released after two years. However the number of the private papers is not as big as it was before the election ,there are private papers continuing their job including the newly opened private FM radio stations. The TV sector is still not allowed for private ownership.

Birhanu Lodamo (2008) indicated bribery as one of the reasons for the improper conduct and unethical journalism in the broadcast media. He investigated the impact of freebies and bribery on the professional practices of journalism in the Ethiopian broadcast media and found out that bribery is wide spread among journalists of the Ethiopian radio and television stations. He attributed the reasons for the wide spread of the problems to low salaries and lack of training on ethics Birhanu questions the attitude of the journalists toward ethical practices of journalism. According to him no trainings on the good conduct of journalism has so far been given to journalists in the broadcast media in the nation.

Recognizing the biased coverage of the 2005 election by both the private press and the public press, Yosef Girmay (2006) observed a positive development in respect to devotion to give coverage to election and related to the election issues. He indicated that the coverage of the elections was a marked improvement on what was perceived to be poor media performance in previous elections. He further stated that the press in the May 2005 election devoted more coverage to the election and there were some extremely positive innovations introduced both leading up to, and during the official campaign period that represent significant steps by the authorities in recognizing the importance of the press in supporting fair and free elections. He noted that the public press did perform better than previous years in terms of allocating more coverage time for contesting political parties to reach the electorate.

Studies that were done on the performances of the Ethiopian press years before the 2005 election period do also have the same results. For instance Bonsa (2000, 2006) asserted based on his research that ‘objective news-reporting is rendered difficult due to the political orientation of most private papers. Any sign of appreciation of government action has thus been treated as being unpatriotic, a collusion with enemies of Ethiopia.’

In the print media journal of the Ethiopian press organization kiros Gebregziabiher (unknown) in his research ‘political reporting in Ethiopian newspapers’ concluded that both the private and government press are partisan. Gebregziabiher stated that especially the private press, without any evidence, negatively reports the government mentioning lack of professional journalists and code of ethics as a basic problem. Shimelis kemal (1995) in his review of the relationship between the government and the press over the years also confirmed that most of the private press approach government actions like an enemy. According to Shimelis denying recognition to the existing government, defamation of politicians, creating hatred among different tribes and inciting the people to civil war were among the reports that the private press entertain for years.

In a different perspective of ethics with regard to coverage of gender, Martha(2006) indicated that the Ethiopian media failed to properly address women domestic violence for the reason that editors and decision makers on the content of the media are themselves biased to the hegemonic attitudes toward women .To put it in her words ‘a close examination of Ethiopian media editors reveals that the socio cultural norms that normalize domestic violence also influence them in their choice of news and media programs’ (Martha.2006,60.) As a result of it the Ethiopian

media has given less attention and coverage of women domestic violence in the country. Martha argued because the issue gets coverage either when the violators or perpetrators are legally convicted or when there is a severe attack happened on women, the public could not get a comprehensive picture of such issues.

There are also instances where private companies accused the private press of unfairly covering their institution in a way that would damage their image in the eyes of the public and its consumers.³ A case in point could be the dispute between the popular weekly newspaper, Reporter and one of the biggest construction companies in the nation, Midroc Ethiopia. The controversy between the Hayat real estate company and the Fortune newspaper which was resolved by the courts decision could also be another case in point.

One of the controversies surrounding the dispute between the government and the private press in the recent years is a matter of ethics. It is a common thing to listen and read government officials accusing the private press of irresponsible journalism that drags the country's effort toward democratization. The officials were heard frequently accusing the press of irresponsible and biased journalism which is controlled and manipulated by people with special interests to take power. On the other side the private press blames the government for suppression of the freedom of expression by various mechanisms including intimidation, taking to jail and forcing journalists to live in exile just to shut their mouth from exposing the wrong doings of the government. One of the major manifestations of the controversies was exhibited on the debates over the recently passed press law. The law has been strongly objected by members of the private press for they claimed it to be repressive and discouraging for freedom of expression in general and for the practice of journalism in particular. On the contrary the government argues for the law to be the right way of implementing freedom of expression and improving journalism practices in a way that is better for the general public.

Having reviewed the existing literature which is mainly concentrating on political coverage, there seems to be a consensus that the Ethiopian journalism in general lacks ethicality. However what the journalists think about the consequences of their stories, media ethics and its relevance to their profession and on the way they are trying to achieve it has not yet been thoroughly investigated. That is the gap where this research tries to fill in. It would be a paramount importance to lay the foundation for giving effect to ethical journalism to try to assess the mindset of the journalists themselves with regard to ethical journalism. In this regard Ethiopian journalists mind set and their techniques of choosing the right act from the wrong in practicing journalism and their values, norms and principles they adhere to do so are worth investigated for the betterment of professional journalism in the nation.

³ U can visit the link below where an interview given by the CEO of Midroc Ethiopia accusing some of the private press of reports that are unfounded and damaging images of their company.
http://www.addisadmass.com/Economy/news_item.asp?NewsID=205 accessed on the 1st of August 2009.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Perspectives on Approaches to Media Ethics

As there are varied perspectives on the concept of ethics, there also exist diverse views on how to approach ethical journalism. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss those dominant views that would help assess Ethiopian journalism ethics in context. For instance Kasoma's (n.d) Afriethics which he argues it to be the best approach for journalism ethics in Africa, and for that matter he even argues for it to be the best lesson to consider for the rest of the world too, would be a point of discussion in this paper because its proposition specifically meant for Africa where Ethiopia is located. His view is selected to frame reactions of Ethiopian journalists, as part of Africa, in a way of detecting their perceptions of ethics and how they want it to be realized. In addition his views are used as a point of reference in the discussion of journalism ethics as it is perceived and done by Ethiopian journalists which actually are the focus of this paper.

In order to see Afriethics in perspective and give a better theoretical frame for the question of this research the view that promotes virtue as the best approach to journalism ethics is also included. But before going to a fairly detailed description of Afriethics and Virtue ethics, going through the dominant theoretical approaches up to the present on approaches to ethics would give a better opportunity to even more understand the problem under investigation. These approaches or theoretical perspectives are commonly categorized as deontological ethics and teleological ethics. The teleologists side quite often interchangeably referred as the consequentialists. And among the deontologists, we could get the popular view named after its major proponent of the theory Immanuel Kant, the Kantians.

The Kantians

The leading philosopher for this school of thought is Immanuel Kant. According to this school of thought, which is also called, Deontological ethics, it is a binding moral law that should govern and guide any ethical considerations including journalism. Here the core point is that moral laws should be respected unconditionally. In other words what is right is right under whatever condition. Nothing can justify making a morally wrong act as the right act under any circumstances or consequence. For Kant it is not the consequences of an action that justifies the rightness of it but the motives of the doer who carries out the action. For instance, telling lie even if to save someone's life would never be acceptable under this school of thought for it is morally unacceptable to lie. To see it from the perspective of journalism ethics, for instance deception as a way of getting information could not be justified. But it should be noted that there are views which leaves a room for understanding reasons for deception or telling a lie among the proponents' of deontological ethics like W.D.Ross (1930). These people are called non-absolutist deontologists. And in their belief there are times whereby it is important to consider the consequence of an action just to use them as a tool help understand the right duty. Consequences help us determine which action is more in keeping with what is already our duty. Consequences help us find what our duty is; they are not what make something our duty. (Briet, 2004)

As quoted by Clifford.G (2001) as a guide for morality of one's action, Kant declared to act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. It is and should be the conscience which according to this school of thought is inborn in every person that should be consulted to decide on ethics. This perspective believes the obligation of a good conscience is to do its duty for the sake of duty. Therefore if taken to the case of journalism ethics, there should be duties which are morally acceptable by everyone that are believed to be also accepted universally and which are guided by good will that should be respected and used to decide what is right and wrong in the practice of journalism. This may lead us to the use of codes of ethics as a final and binding rules of duty that determine ethical decisions in the profession. To put it differently good will coupled with doing morally the right thing, according to the Kantianists' view, should dictate ethical decisions including journalism.

On the critics side the basic questions that are raised regarding the unchanging principles the deontologists attribute to natural law or universal reason are their nature to be subjective opinions. These critics come from the utilitarian's like Jeremy Bentham. John Stuart Mill also sees the deontological ethics as failing to specify principles that should take priority when the rights and duties are in conflict. (Clifford.G.Christians, etal, 2001)

The Consequentialists

In general terms as its name indicated ethical decisions or moral judgments for this school of thought are the outcome of the action. It should primarily be focused on the consequences of the action before moral judgments or any ethical decisions are passed. Basically, the decision would be judged as ethical or moral when it is believed that it can have good consequences in the end. It can be seen as a direct opposite view with the deontologist. The deontologists form the rightness of their decisions on the basis of the character of the action itself whereas the consequentialists give emphasis on the output or the end result of their action. (Breit, 2004)

Pertaining to what it means by the good output of an action, it is mainly the pleasure that can be enjoyed by the greatest number which forms the basis for measuring the consequence of an action as good or bad. In other words if an action is believed to give pleasure for the greatest number, then it would be taken as a morally right and ethically correct action. The commonly used name related to the idea of pleasure to measure ethicality or the rightness of an action is utilitarianism.

As a way of implementing it people are strongly advised to first consider and list the possible outcome of an action so that the one that produces the greatest possible balance of good over evil could be identified.

Seen from journalism perspective, the consequentialists believe that for every report journalists want to publish and disseminate to their audience a thorough consideration of their consequence in terms of affecting the audience and the nation and even the rest of the world must be done in

order to figure out the ethicality of the story. In other words every case would be treated against its consequence but not predetermined rules, duties or codes of conduct.

One of the major criticisms forwarded to this school of thought is the ability for identifying consequences of actions comprehensively. John Rawls, a critic of utilitarianism argues grasping the consequences of any action would vary from person to person which he argues could influence moral or ethical decisions of actions in the same way. But considering such arguments the consequentialists leave room for varied perspectives and believes that the right action is judged by its good consequences from the observer's perspective. In the case of journalism it is the individual journalist perspective for identifying the possible consequences of their actions that is used to decide on the right choice. As long as the journalist believes and accepts and tries to choose the good from the bad, the ethical from the unethical or the moral from the immoral on the bases of consequences of actions, the consequentialists give room for individual perspective differences in grasping consequences of events. This would probably lead us to the idea of virtue ethics which gives emphasis on the character of individual journalists to ethical practices of the profession.

Virtue Ethics

This school of thought bases its assumption on seeking a solution for problems of achieving ethical practices of journalism basing mainly on the individual journalists character. According to this view external impositions of whatsoever, like predetermined rules and regulations, codes of conduct to be strictly followed and/or any other guidance does not serve ethical practices so long as they are not psychologically internalized by individual journalists. (Aaron Quinn, 2007)

In other words the argument for virtue ethics proponents is that external ethical regulations should lay their foundation on internal view of individual journalists where they believe is moral reasons and motivations originate in the journalist's thinking And this virtues internal view is believed to come from life style, professional experience and through education and training. Quinn (2007) has put three notions of virtue ethics for a comprehensive understanding of the theory; virtue, phronesis, and eudemonia.

By virtue it is to mean that in choosing the good from the bad, it is always important to have an understanding of what is intended to be achieved by choosing the act thought to be right. In other words it is not only choosing the right act which is important but also to have the entire motive and understanding of why it is done. Quinn explained the idea of virtue relating it with an example of being truthful as an act of good .To use his own words;

'.....as possessing the virtue of truthfulness implies an understanding that what is good about truth is a deeply ingrained part of one's character, well entrenched in one's psyche, and depends not exclusively on the act of truth telling but largely on what motivates one to tell the truth and/or what one intends to achieve by being truthful.' (Aaron Quinn.2007, 170)

It is a matter of being both good and right which is promoted by the idea of virtue as part of the elements that explain virtue theory. For instance the kantians mainly focuses on the rightness of the action while the virtueists give emphasis on the motives and the reasons for deciding to be right. To put it differently, it is the emphasis on being both good and right that differentiates the virtueists from the other normative theories such as the kantians which mainly focuses on the rightness of the action. According to proponents of virtue ethics like Oakley & Cocking quoted by Quinn (2007) rightness, properly understood, can only be derivative of goodness, in so far as what is right must be based on what is valuable with regard to certain notions of the good.

Being virtuous does not come out of the blue. It is in response to this assertion that the idea of phronesis, an important feature of virtue theory has been forwarded by Quinn. Phronesis refers to the practical wisdom one has to posses in order to be virtuous. Unless there is the practical wisdom to choose the good from the bad and the right from the wrong it is going to be very difficult to be virtuous, according to the theory of virtue ethics. And this wisdom is believed to come from life experiences like good upbringing, good moral and other forms of education, professional experience and others which could add up to the development of a good personality.

Understanding the ultimate aim of being good so as to make human life the best possible defines the other important element in virtue ethics, Eudemonia. This concept connects the idea of being virtuous to make the right decision with possessing the necessary wisdom to understand the importance of our choices to give them meaning in making human life the best possible.

In conclusion, Quinn discussed that the virtue ethics relies on good character and practical wisdom for practical reasoning rather than committing to the strict decision procedures common to both consequentialistic and deontological theories that, to say the least, fail to offer the correct moral judgment for all moral problems. Moreover, with practical wisdom guided by the virtues of justice and integrity, virtuous journalists have both an impartial and agent-relative view of morality. Second, virtue ethics is particularly suited to journalism because of the profession's demands—journalism requires quick thinking and is fraught with moral confusion; virtue ethics offers a habituated person who by disposition is prone to make good decisions. (Quinn, 2007)

As Klaidman and Beauchamp (1987:19) pointed out virtuous traits of all kinds are especially significant in crises and environments such as journalism that are often too pressured to permit prolonged and careful reflection. By cultivating moral virtues, doing what is right in these situations can become a matter of course rather than a conflicted debate over how to interpret rules whose meaning and application may be less than clear. Virtue ethics has been criticized for problems related to justification and conflicting virtues. Quinn has summarized the critics on problems of justification as follows;

Utilitarians and deontologists criticize virtue ethics for its 'uncodifiability' and its subsequent lack of a clear decision theory to justify its results. According to their perspective the task of

ethical theory is to come up with a code consisting of universal rules or principles with the following two significances;

1. The rule(s) would amount to a decision procedure for determining what the right action was in any particular case, for example Kant's Categorical Imperative and the general principle of utility.
2. The rule(s) would be stated in such terms that any non-virtuous person could understand and apply it (them) correctly. (Hursthouse, 2003)

As a counter argument from the virtue ethics proponents it has been said that ultimately, 'without moral sensitivity, perception, imagination, and judgment informed by experience' one could not apply rules or principles correctly'. (Hursthouse, 2003).

The second criticism is related to settling conflicts among competing virtues. Consequentialists and deontologists question how one might possibly prioritize between the plural, conflicting, and often incommensurate values prominent in virtue ethics. For instance, if one is guided to be both honest and courageous, but one must in some circumstances violate some facet of one virtue to achieve success in the other. Thus, as a journalist, the virtue of courage may drive a reporter to act covertly to gather information to uncover grand corruption, yet the virtue of honesty may guide the reporter away from using deception as a means to that end.

The virtue ethicists recognize the challenges of problems related to settling conflicts among competing virtues. They do also believe that it is a problem across the board for all theoretical views of ethics including the consequentialists and the deontologists and not unique to virtue ethics. As a way of resolving it or trying to seek a better solution Quinn pointed that there will often be more than a single right action for a given circumstance, so long as the action stems from one's virtuous character.

Afriethics

It is Francis P. Kasoma (n.d) professor from Zambia who proposed Afriethics to be the best way of practicing journalism in an ethical manner in Africa and even he believes it to have a good lesson for the rest of the world journalism especially for the western world which he thinks lack ethicality and even is contaminating the African journalism.

Afriethics according to him is the best treatment for unethical practices of journalism in Africa for it follows a communal approach to solve moral problems. He thinks that the basic moral problem happening in journalism practices everywhere emanates from the individualistic and divisivist approach of the profession. Specially money and power driven activities of the profession as it is the case in many parts of the world, are leading journalism to unethical and immoral paths, according to Kasoma.

Kasoma claims Africa has a long existing culture of its own ethical checks and balances which is the right prescription for journalism to be ethical and healed from its moral problem.

Guided by the communal approach of the African culture to solve moral problems, Kasoma advises African journalists to have journalistic solidarity. He does not believe that leaving ethical problems to be resolved by individual journalist and media houses would resolve moral problems. Rather he proposes journalists as a collective should be more concerned with the effect on society of what they disseminate, instead of leaving the responsibility to individual journalists or media houses as largely seem to be the case. In other words Kasoma is saying that it should be African values and traditions which inform and guide African journalism towards ethicality. Any imposition or adaptation of ethical codes and/or value suggestions that are coming from outside Africa, he believes, is not helping and even it is damaging the profession. Afriethics stresses Travers' (1989) assertion that 'journalism should be based on the socio-political and ethical tenets of the society it serves.' (Kasoma, n.d, 89). One of the core points Kasoma has raised as a way of explaining the foundations of Afriethics is the yardsticks used by African culture to choose between the good and the bad. An act is said to be good in the African culture when it is believed that it serves the community. The more beneficial to a larger community the acts are, the ethically better they are. Thus, acts that only serve an individual are not as good as those that serve the whole family and, similarly, acts that only serve the family are less good compared to those that serve the clan and the tribe. Acts that are only for the good of the individual at the exclusion of the clan and the tribe may even be regarded as bad. Thus, to eat alone individually or as a family when the rest of the village or clan is starving is regarded as bad act and a person who repeatedly does this is seen as a bad person. If put it hierarchically an act that serves the nation is considered to be even more good than it is for the clan. An act for the clan is given a higher value than it is for the family and the act for the family is better than for self. In other words the emphasis is given to ones relationship to others in order to identify the good from the bad. Therefore Afriethics suggests journalists to follow suit with the above assertion and do apply the yardsticks put in hierarchy. Journalism should by no means be for individual benefits but for the general public.

The other important element in the explanation of Afriethics as a better way for professional and ethical journalism is the way African culture tries to correct bad acts. In Africa the bad person is not simply condemned or stigmatized. There is always counseling from the elders given to the bad people to change them to good people. The elders are believed to have a wider life experience and wisdom to solve moral and other problems in a society. There are also cases whereby younger people are counseling the elders when it is the elder who believed to be bad.

African culture in addition to counseling, gives also recognition for the influences that come from family and friends on the bad behavior. For instance when bad acts are done from people with a bad upbringing the blame on them would not be as harsh as it is on people with a good upbringing. In Africa it is believed that parents considered to be bad usually do not beget good people. If people from such background do well then their reward will be much higher than

others from a good family background. The opposite is also true if a person with a good upbringing is found out to be bad. They receive a harsher treatment than bad people from bad family backgrounds.

The same analogy is applied with friends. It is believed that bad friends make people bad. Therefore it is advised not to have bad friends. As it is the case in family, people receive different level of condemnation depending on the reason why they are bad. The worst condemnation is on people that do bad out of their will to be followed by people with a good background and the least is on people that do bad because of influences from friends, families, bad spirits and others.

Afriethics does also lay its foundation on the relationship between the living and the dead in African culture. It is in the form of good and bad spirits that the dead are playing a role in the fabrics of the society's moral obligations and other forms. Kasoma (2009) quoted Fortes (1960) on the matter and here it is what he has to say;

'The bad spirits are people who died as bad people and who have an axe to grind against society generally and the individual, family or clan in particular. They are bent on revenge against wrong done to them. Sometimes the revenge is on an individual who wronged them while they were still alive. To ensure protection against both the bad people and bad spirits, the living seeks the intercession of the good spirits. This is done through ancestral worship (which should be distinguished from cults of the dead' (Fortes, 1960:122-157).

The basis of morality in African society is the fulfillment of obligations to kins-people, both living and dead. It is believed that some of the departed and the spirits keep watch over people to make sure that they observe the moral laws and are punished when they break them. (Mbiti, 1975, 175 and Wilson 1971, 77).

Based on the above describing features of Afriethics, Kasoma advises African journalists to come together and collectively address the issue of morality and ethical practices in their profession. Instead of taking such matters individually, collective approach which is informed by the communal life style of Africans, would best serve problems of ethics and professionalism in the field. Therefore, Kasoma promotes as it is indicated in Afriethics whenever there are problems of ethical practices journalists should address it collectively irrespective of who makes it. Journalists taking a lesson from their own culture of elders counseling people with bad behaviors, they should also counsel their fellow journalists, from which ever media house they might be, to correct any observed unethical practice of journalism before condemning or ostracizing. There should also be a culture of discussing on every issue in their profession to make it even better in serving the interest of the public as Afriethics has picked it as the right thing to do in African culture serving the society not satisfying or propagating pursuit of

individual needs. They should hold that the basis of morality in journalism in Africa should be the fulfillment of obligations to society and to the journalistic corps.

Kasoma does also encouraged culture of dialogue in the news room on what to and how to do about dissemination of news items instead of purely editor controlled decision of news stories. This dialogue should put criterion for vetoing the dissemination of information to be the good such information brings to the society in the first instance and to the family of journalists in the second instance. And all the above mentioned suggestions are made by Kasoma in the assumption that, alike virtue ethics, for their realization there should be a deep sense of what is right and wrong in journalism which emanates from the African culture of morality and ethicality. Solidarity of journalists is also a prerequisite for the realization of Afriethics. Especially as it has been a trend in many parts of Africa the government media journalists and private media journalists should not see each other as enemy. Rather they should come together and counsel each other on issues of ethical performance of their profession.

Therefore on the basis of the above features of African culture Kasoma suggested what he calls Afriethics to be the best option for making African journalism ethics better. Specially emphasizing ones relationship with other people, dead or alive, as factors for morals to have been evolved to keep the society in harmony, he suggested Afriethics to be the approach for the right practices of journalism in Africa. In a way of summarizing his discussion of the foundations for Afriethics and summing up his reasons for suggesting it to the African journalism here is what he had to say

'Thus individual morals must conform to family morals and if the two conflict, the family morals are held paramount. Similarly, family morals must conform to clan, and clan to tribe morals. What strengthens the family, the clan and the tribe or ethnic group is generally morally good. To safeguard the welfare of the community, there are many taboos concerning what may not be done and the consequences for disregarding these taboos. This author submits that this ordering of morality in African society should be emulated by African journalists in the practice of their profession.' (Kasoma,n.d, 108)

Afriethics has been criticized for its exaggerations of the cultural peculiarity of Africans from the rest of the world specially the west. Banda (2009), one of the critiques of Afriethics stated that Afriethics has taken for granted the existence of the pre-colonial culture to this date without giving a room for the influences that happened on African culture from colonioalism, post colonialism and globalization. Banda quoted people like Nyamnjoh (2005: 91),Tomaselli (2003: 436), Kymlicka and He (2005) to support his argument on the transformation African culture gone through due to the influences mentioned above. Given this reality, according to Banda, Afriethics discounts the scarred history of Africa.

The other critique which was forwarded by Nyamnjoh (2005: 91) as it is quoted by Banda is that Afriethics ignores the attitude of the young African generation on its elders when it comes to

counseling. According to him the wisdom of elders, in the eyes of the youth today, are to blame for the predicament of Africa today. Therefore there should be some work done in terms of convincing the youth about elders wisdom before thinking of applying Afriethics suggestion on seeking counseling and advice from elders in the first place. To summarize it briefly, Afriethics is criticized for its lack of theoretical base and practicability difficulty, how it seems to discount the scarred history of Africa, how it invokes an extreme form of African particularism, how it seems to naturalize, without any explicitly stated normative media and social theory, a particular way of life ostensibly unique to the African society, and how it can be appropriated as praxis in contemporary Africa. (Banda, 2009)

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I will be discussing the methodological approaches employed in my investigation trying to understand the values and principles of Ethiopian Journalists. At the core of the investigation is assessing whether the current trend of journalism practices in the country would give effect to ethical journalism on the bases of the ethical foundations of the journalists toward their profession. In a way it also examines where the trend of journalism practices is heading in relation to responsible and ethical media practices. The following research questions are designed in order to get answers for the core problem under investigation;

- 1 What are the values and principles of Ethiopian journalists?
- 2 What do Ethiopian journalists think as their professional role?
- 3 How do they describe the current practices of journalism in Ethiopia in terms of media ethics?
- 4 What are their references to determine ethical behaviors? Do they have their own ethical codes?
- 5 If there are their own institutional codes, what are the common features and where do they differ?
- 6 What are their approaches to journalism ethics and how do they want to achieve it?
- 7 What are the factors that influence ethical journalism in the country and how do the journalists describe them?

In Ethiopia, journalism is mainly done at an individual level and institutionalizing journalism practices has still been at its infant stage. This is true especially for the private media. The public media in this regard is by far better than the private sector. In order to infer foundational values it is important to try and know how Ethiopian journalists ,both working in the country and from abroad ,select and process information within the context of perceiving, interpreting and giving meaning to matters of ethics in their profession. In other words description of journalists daily practices in relation to decisions made in every step of the way in their profession would give the best picture for the problem under investigation. The researcher believes that investigating the journalists mind so as to understand the way they perceive, interpret and giving meaning to their profession would lead to have the foundation for any effort to give effect to ethical and responsible journalism as it is always been advocated. We may better understand the communication processes of ethical norms and values too. The direction I am following in my research focus could put me with those who argue that journalism research would be incomplete without the focus on understanding what is going on in the minds of journalists. (Wilbur

Schramm, 1971, Seth Geiger and John Newhagen, 1993 and Bu Zhong, 2006). These authors believe that media research traditionally focused on messages in terms of the content of the message and the program genres dictated by the media. Zhong (2006) goes even further and mentions cognitive scientists claim quoting (Newell, 1990) that 'all human decisions are made by mind, which is, in essence, a control system that guides the behaving organism in its complex interactions with the dynamic real world.' (Zhong 2006, 10)

Based on the core idea of what is stated above, the methodological approaches are chosen and designed in a way that best suits to finding the right answers for the research questions that are framing the problem under investigation.

One of the questions that frame the core of this project is looking at how news stories are chosen, written and got published by journalists who are working in Ethiopia and those who are working for the web from abroad. Here it should be noted that the news stories that are treated in this study as news at the web from abroad are referring to websites that are run by Ethiopians living outside of their country and practicing journalism targeting Ethiopians in their homeland and Diasporas as well. And trying to get answers for this question is believed to reveal values, norms and principles informing the news decisions made.

As part of their reflections on the way they make news decisions, their views were also investigated in relation to the political atmosphere they are working in. By political atmosphere it is to mean the political influences on the journalism practices of a country. To borrow Joseph Turols (2010) description he said;

"Political influences refer to the types of power those officials exert. The leaders of some countries have more power to impose their will over their nation's institutions than do the leaders of other countries. A dictator with a strong army to enforce his orders will typically be able to exert more direct control over his country's television stations and newspapers than a dictator who does not yet feel strong enough to pull every aspect of his society under his control." Turols (2010:87)

The basic assessment point with regard to political environment for this research is trying to draw the relationship between freedoms of the press, the way the political environment is handling it and its impact on ethical journalism.

There are two groups of journalist here, Ethiopian in the country and the Diaspora journalists. Each of these groups is working in a different political environment. Most of the Diaspora journalists are living and working in the western world where the liberal view of freedom of expression is in its full power. On the other hand the journalists working in Ethiopia are in a controversial political environment in its conveniences for freedom of the press. This paper is not endorsing any views that Ethiopia currently is under authoritarian regime or not. That is not the objective of this paper. But it has taken many complaints from international and local journalism advocates and individual journalists and chose to have a theoretical framework that would help

explain the problem under investigation by considering both the liberal and authoritarian view of freedom of the press. How does it look like journalism produced in a liberal world and sent to the authoritarian regime by people originally from the latter but living and working in the former? On the other hand since the Diaspora journalists are targeting Ethiopians consumers for their products, their take on and practical happenings on the domestic political environments that are impacting their job will have also been evaluated. Questions like how does the regime want to suppress you and how do you manage to reach your audiences makes up the assessment.

In addition the relationship between the legal and political systems and journalism ethics in the eyes of the journalists in action, how one is influencing the other add up to one of the research questions trying to giving answers for the core problem of this project. In doing so figuring out the shared ethical values and principles of journalism between the domestic and the Diaspora media do have a significant contribution for this study. To put it differently the conceptions by the liberal political environment as the role of the media to provide the public with all sorts of information so that the public has the ability to take what it chooses and ignore what it doesn't versus the authoritarian outlook of the media being a development agent and educator of the society was assessed from the point of view of the journalists how it is influencing their perception and practices of ethical journalism. Market influences have also taken a place in this study as part of assessing factors influencing journalists' practices. Sources with different social power instances dominantly used by journalists for their daily job would also be seen and get analyzed as a way of assessing its possible impact on journalists' conceptions of ethics.

The rules and ethical codes meant for governing journalism practices in the country have also been investigated within the context of individual journalist reflection on them and the meanings they are given to them.

Identifying how the journalists think their values develop in their mind was also part of the research questions. These factors would help better understand norms and values that are dominating the Ethiopian media.

Investigating the decision processes of cases that could put ethical dilemmas in media organizations have also been chosen to make up to the research questions. This could help strengthen the validity of the research. Because it gives chances of comparing and contrasting what is being thought and actually practiced.

Value hierarchies are also other areas of investigations that add to the research questions. Studying the hierarchies could also provide opportunities to have a deeper insight into how journalists seek to identify what is worthy of journalism works in general and news stories in particular. It also gives ideas to locate where the journalists stand in terms of what they think the role of journalism could or should be, be it in their society or elsewhere.

The status of the contents produced by the journalists seen by the mirror of ethical standards makes the other question for this project. Traditional journalism values as opposed to the

Diaspora journalist have also been treated in this research. The Diaspora journalists are chosen for they are using the new technology (internet) as their major tool to practice journalism.

Another point to be taken into account from this dissertation is the importance of questioning journalists on their awareness on the role of their profession in influencing the mental and social health of their consumers.

Most of the emphases here is basically on individual journalists and their perceptions and interpretations of values and principles for it is believed to be playing a major role in influencing content of journalistic works. As Gans (1979) and Gitlin (1980) put it in a category of communicator-centered approach, media content is influenced by journalists' socialization and attitudes as formed by psychological, personal, political, and professional attitudes intrinsic to the individual journalist. In the same line with this claim Donsbach (2004, 135) as quoted by Bu Zhong (2006) argues that the subjective beliefs of journalists are also believed to exert considerable influence on news decisions. 'There is sufficient evidence that a journalist's predispositions toward an issue or an actor can affect his or her news decisions' (Donsbach, 2004, 135). Journalists' description of their news decision making and their fellow journalists have also been raised as a show case in point. (Bu Zhong, 2006)

The assumption to choose the right methodological approach is basically based on the idea that in order to best understand the moral foundations of Ethiopian journalists in relation to ethical practices of journalism one has to try to understand why and how decisions are made by journalists on the final products of their work which is story production. As Robert A. White (n.d, 43) puts it '.....to understand what foundational motivations are providing reasons for consistently following ethical norms, one must observe journalists in action and understand their reasons for choosing one set of news stories rather than others or their reasons for interpreting a public event in a particular way'.

In summary this study aims at investigating journalists' themselves perspectives on the issue of ethics. It tried to explore the journalists own articulation or description of ethical values, principles and standards in a way it helps comprehensively understand the ethical landscape of Ethiopian journalism from within the country and abroad. It tried to get answers ranging from hierarchies of values and principles to choices made to ethical dilemmas. It also explores stand points of journalists for controversial issues of ethical journalism in the country and rules and regulations including ethical codes and others meant for self governing standards. The contents of a certain period publications within the context of figuring out the possible disparities and similarities with the actual belief and perceptions, understandings and meanings given to ethical values and principles have also been reviewed.

In all levels of this research project efforts are made to discuss the ideologies which frame interpretations of journalism values and ethical codes by Ethiopian journalists.

Theoretical explanations from journalism and philosophy of ethics and morality are used to explore the conceptual shortfalls of the current journalism and journalism ethics in Ethiopian Journalism. As Rhonda Breit (2004) used such an approach to investigate the effects of ethical codes in ethical journalism practices in Australia, this research followed suit the same approach with a difference in the core emphases given. She focused on ethical codes and organizational structures while this research focused on individual journalists. And I totally agree with Rhonda Breit in that looking for a better practice of ethical journalism in a nation, theoretical framework will be needed to understand and evaluate the actual practice of journalism which is underway. In fact she used the argument for only evaluating the capacity of a system of self regulation to encourage ethical journalism. But I do believe that it also helps evaluate the individual journalists' value systems and its impact on ethical journalism too. My view goes with the idea that 'Existence of ethics codes cannot be a guarantee for the existence of attitude and perceptions of the journalists working for the institution with such codes. Sometimes it was learnt that there are times whereby the journalists are not even aware of the codes in their institution in the first place' (Wotruba, Chonko, and Loe (2001) in Barnett, Tim (2003, 1). In order to capture what is discussed the major instrument employed is in depth interviews with the journalists themselves who are at editors level where the final decisions are made and conducting survey for the rest of the journalists. All the journalists' responses to get their decisions and reasons for the decisions they made on cases possibly leading to ethical dilemmas were also gathered. Contents of certain period publications on the same topic across the media landscape in the country and abroad in the web were also reviewed as a supplement for the investigation. In addition technical literatures like, meeting proceedings, rules and regulation documents, policy documents, meeting recordings, articles published, interviews of journalists on different media outlets and discussion panels held on issues of journalism in the country were also used to supplement the research tools employed for a more comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation. In summary these tools are adding to the triangulation of the method. Basically it is interpretive qualitative research method which is informing this project. And it is through the grounded theory approach which is planned to reach at the core aim of the investigation.

Grounded Theory

This study aims at finding the best possible explanation of ethical practices of Ethiopian journalism within the context of ethical journalism both from the domestic and the Diaspora press. Among the three different theoretical attitudes of methodological distinctions addressing the core purpose of a research recognized by Mjøset (2006a, 2006b, 2005) I chose to frame my study on the grounded theory approach.

Grounded theory was originally developed by two American scholars, Glasser and Strauss (1967), in order to get a defined and systematic way of collecting and analyzing data to generate concepts that would help explain the problem under investigation. (Breit, 2004). It claimed to focus on the process of generating a theory by pinpointing the weaknesses of the traditional theory formation as mainly to be not coming from the data, not grounded in the data. The authors

argued that traditionally social science researches are focusing simply on testing already existed theories but not generating concepts. And they even argue further that the existing theories were not clear how they are developed and do not ground on the data. According to the two American authors 1967's book under the title *discovering ground theory*, the best way to theorize is through the process of grounding the data. Lack of doing so will lead to make the theories to be less understandable for theoretical advancements and practical applications which theories are causes developed for. As the name ground indicated it seeks to ground its research process on the behavior, words and actions of the subjects of the study. It is meant for, as it is described by a Christina Goulding (1999:6) 'systematically collecting data which could be interpreted and developed through a process offering clear and precise guidelines for the verification and validation of findings.' Goulding locates the core motive of the theory to be devising a mechanism which can bring harmony to the way empirical data and theory remained to be interrelated. The main impetus behind the movement was to bridge the gap between theoretically 'uninformed' empirical research and empirically 'uninformed' theory, by grounding theory in data. It could also be said that it was a reaction for the belief that the role of a research is testing the already existing theories. This theory gives a prior emphasis in the interplay between the raw data and the analyses. It is not a must to first collect the data and go to the analyses stage as it was traditionally the case. But here the collection of the data and the analyses go hand in hand through the process. To put it in a very simplified way if the data at hand when analyzed demands another data, it will follow. Rhonda Breit (2004, 50) quoting Glaser & Straus 1967, Straus & Corbin 1990 and Pandit 1996), describes this process as '...continual comparison and evaluation. It is a form of conceptual mapping, which shapes the collection of data through a process of hypothesis or proposition building and integration.' I do share the reason why Breit chose to use grounded theory for her research to be a rationale and decided to use it for me too. This theory suits the changing media environments as it addresses specific problems and inductively builds theory from data collected on that problem. My emphases could be on the explanation based type of theory as it was discussed by Mjoset (2005). This study plans to analyze the data by being context sensitive and within the framework of the existing theories related to the subject matter under investigation. Sensitivity to the data and conscious of context will add up to the verifiability of the output and the replicability of the findings. Mjoset quoted the following from Corbin & Strauss (1990, 424) to substantiate his argument of grounded theory to be a replicable one.

'A grounded theory is reproducible in the limited sense that it is verifiable. One could take the propositions that are made explicit or left implicit (whatever the case may be) and test them. However, probably, no theory that deals with a social psychological phenomenon is actually reproducible insofar as finding new situations or other situations whose conditions exactly match those of the original study, though many major conditions may be similar. Unlike a physical phenomenon, it is very difficult to set up experimental or other designs in which one can recreate all of the original conditions and control all the extraneous variables that may impinge upon the phenomenon under

investigation. When testing hypotheses derived from the propositions of a grounded theory, the investigator would have to specify the conditions under which Lars Mjøset 384 SOSIOLOGISK TIDSSKRIFT the hypothesis(es) was being tested and make adjustment in the theory to fit those conditions, (if they did not match those originally specified in the theory)'

(Corbin & Strauss 1990: 424).

Grounded theory approach as it is discussed by Mjøset seeks to find theoretical explanations of a phenomenon under investigation. Such an approach takes an assumption that theoretical constructs are negotiated by empirical material. Rasmussen in Steensen (2010) makes a similar assertion and argues that a theoretical construct 'should have a fair chance to emerge from the empirical analysis, and not operate inherently in the presuppositions of the theory that guides it' (2010, 13). In other words the purpose of this study is to relate theoretical concepts to empirical material. But it is not in the standard assumption of simply testing a theory by empirical research. Rather it is based on the idea of grounded theory as it is defined by Steen Steensen (2010). Steen based on the assumption by the American philosopher of science Peirce takes the idea of grounded theory in light of abduction. Abduction according to Steen (2010, 33) involves 'the pragmatist attitude of finding the best possible (theoretical) explanation of a phenomenon by reasoning. It is an attitude that neither aims at producing general theory, nor at explaining phenomena in light of general theory. It is a hermeneutic approach implying that theory is constantly revised by new empirical material. It allows for a thorough analysis of empirical material without being restrained by preconceived theoretical concepts or by attempts at generating macro theoretical concepts.' But here it should be noted that the idea does not mean not using preconceived ideas or theories in one's study. Rather it is an idea of grounding of established theoretical concepts.

In this research I want to investigate the news decision making and perceptions of journalism ethical values and principles among Ethiopian journalist in the country and abroad. I want to compare and contrast these issues within the context of different social, political and economic environments under which the two groups of journalists, the domestic and abroad, are working. And I want to find best possible theoretical explanations of the two groups understanding and practices of journalism in their respective environments And by doing so I would be able to generate concepts that explain the phenomenon under investigation which is in broad terms the moral foundations of Ethiopian journalists in the country and abroad who are targeting Ethiopian as their consumers. Since the theory has no restrictions on the kind of data I am going to use for the qualitative analyses purposes quantitative data was also used. (Glaser, 2001, 2003). However as it is typical of the theory, the statistics and presentation of figures are used to supplement the qualitative based analyses of this research. The focus is on presenting statement of various concepts that are generated from the continual investigation and comparisons of the data and relevant theories. It is, as it is said by the founders (Glasser and Stauss 1967, 4) 'hard study of much data'. In other words I was using grounded theory approach to generate explanations of the

problem under investigation. And I would be concerned on the validity of my research to be in what is to be ‘fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability’ (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Glaser 1978, Glaser 1998). Fitness refers to how close the concepts generated are with the issues under investigation and what it is representing to. In Glaser & Strauss(1967:3) own words it is to indicate that ‘the categories are readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated at the data under investigation. Relevance is for its ability of capturing the attention of the participants with it to be beyond academic work. It should be understandable to academicians and to significant laymen involved too. Workability refers to the applicability of the theory in explaining how the problem is resolved with many variations. And modifiability is dealing with the nature of alterability when relevant data is compared to the existing data.’

The above discussion explains why I chose to work on the grounded theory approach as it is understood and explained by Steen (2010). Otherwise it is also possible to see explanation of grounded theory approach as an approach of developing a theory based on the empirical data, As it is the case in Rhonda Breit’s (2004) dissertation on journalism Ethics.

The theoretical standpoints or explanations I am relying on would come from both journalism and moral and ethical theories. Journalism because I am studying journalism practices Therefore I will see theoretical explanations of journalism and journalism ethics as a lens to have an in-depth insight into my investigation. Moral and ethical theories will also be of great use for they try to explore the origin and application of the concepts in depth. Theories on decision making processes will also be consulted.

Just as case in point it could be said that, from my observation on the practice of Ethiopian journalists online journalism which is basically done by journalists living outside of the country, there is a tendency among journalists to believe that it is ethical to try and attack a certain group or idea based on verified facts and any sort of opinion. Being polarized does not seem to have a problem in these groups of journalists. In other words as long as they believe it serves the society, deliberately attacking or exposing or merely concentrating on what could expose the government or the ruling party or if it is from the side of the ruling party doing the same on the opposition, do not have any problems.

What could be said about this attitude seen from the normative approaches of journalism ethics? Questions of the following types would dictate how theoretical points of views are used as a lens to explain norms, values, principles and standards Ethiopian journalists hold.

1. To which normative theories Ethiopian journalists’ views and perceptions of journalism ethics could be categorized or does it need a new theoretical explanation?

- 3 What could be said about attitudes that might take polarizations to have no ethical problems as long as it serves the society’s interest, if seen from the normative approaches of journalism ethics?

The above questions are formulated in the assumption that it is through the evolution of journalism the world reached to kind of consensus that there should be a responsible journalism. In other words ethical journalism practices seem to be no more questionable. The controversy or the question might be on how to make journalism more and more ethical so that the consumers would benefit from it. And this research project in general is planning to contribute for the same cause by trying to understand the main actors, the journalists themselves, better through investigating their values and decision making processes.

The data

Although the approach in this study is largely focused on individual journalists' value and principles, the analyses will be made in relation to broader issues involving political systems, media contents and ideologies with regard to ethics and journalism practices. It follows a similar approach at a research direction level with Gans (1979) and Gitlin (1980) in Brecken Chinn Swartz (2006, 32) in that it aims at 'a qualitative examination of producer intent, seeking to ground terms in concepts that journalists themselves choose to articulate.'

To this end, the data collection processes involves three categories. These three categories have been developed based on the issues raised by the journalists themselves when they are interviewed in the process of gathering the data and theoretical bases found out in the process of analyzing the data. The three broader categories used in this research project are, Political environment, contents produced and the individual journalist's values and principles in their own words. The categories are meant for getting a comprehensive picture of the core investigation of this research project which is Ethiopian journalists' values and principles within the context of journalism ethics in Ethiopia. What are the values and principles Ethiopian journalists hold in doing journalism and how news decisions are made. To this end it is believed that looking at the political environment, which is directly related to journalism practices these days and raised as a big factor of influence by the journalists themselves time and again, the content produced for they reflect how values and principles are being actually practiced and the core elements that makes why journalism ethics issues are worth talking about in the first place and individual journalists own words for they are the major actors in the profession would help investigate what is deep down in their minds, their socialization and attitudes toward ethics. As Gans (1979) and Gitlin (1980) call it 'communicator- centered approach' is developed in the belief that media content is influenced by journalists' socialization and attitudes as formed by psychological, personal, political, and professional attitudes intrinsic to the individual journalist'. This research project would also share the gist of these authors and believe that investigating the stated areas above would be possible to have a better understanding of the minds and the decisions that are used and made to have the final journalism products. This would lead to investigating the influences on news decision making processes.

The first group of data is collected from various sources that are indicative of the political environment in the nation. The idea to consider such would help understand journalists' values and principles in context. Therefore instead of simply going and trying to know individual journalists mind ,assessing the political environment each group of the subjects of the study, the domestic and the Diaspora Ethiopian journalists, are working in would be of great importance. The environment will be assessed within the context of political ideologies, particularly the authoritarian and the liberal political views with a specific focus on freedom of expression and more importantly journalism practices. The liberal is chosen because the Diaspora journalists are living and working in countries that are with a liberal political environment. The authoritarian is used because, as it was discussed in the previous section, Ethiopian political system is dominantly believed to be categorized under the authoritarian regime when it comes to journalism and freedom of expression.

In trying to have a deeper insight into the political environment government policies, activists reports, journalists complaints, court cases, meeting records, proceedings which contain Ethiopian journalism as their major topic were all consulted.

The second category is the contents published by the journalists and have been already used by their target audiences. From the contents a lot can be inferred about values and standards. The contents will be chosen in being conscious to have a similar topic and published at the same period of time for it would help compare and contrast different journalists' works with a special emphasis on the two major groups of subjects, the domestic journalists under authoritarian regime and the Diaspora ones in a liberal world. The domestic journalists in this study cover only the private ones. I believe that government journalists are more or less working under a direct command by government loyalist bosses while relatively speaking the private media has contextual freedom to do its job. This is to mean that at least the private journalists would decide on their stories by their own given that it might have consequences. Therefore it sounds logical to assess how the private journalists decide and what they value instead of government journalists whose values and principles might not do better than being held by them or it sounds their values doesn't do anything for their daily job.

The content review is based on Stephen J. A. Ward's (2009) lists of assessment areas in ethical practices of journalism and Kazuhiro Maeshima's (2007) five categories for content analyzing values and principles of journalism ethics. I chose them because they could give a good insight into the matter under investigation. The following are lists of areas the authors used for their research. The first three are from Ward (2009,) and the rest from Maeshima (2007).

1 editorial independence

2 verification of stories

3 anonymity of sources

4 main topic of the article9media agenda)

5 Key concepts

6 actors in the report

7 Positive-negative portrayal of each actor

8 sources and quotations of the news.

Editorials of each media would also be worth analyzing for it exposes the media stands and values than any other writings. Now a merger and a slight modification of the above list to make it fit with this project gives us the following final list of this research;

1 Editorial Independence

2 Verification of stories

3 Sources and quotations

4 key concepts and main topic

5 Tone of the story

The editorial independence is an indicative of journalism practices where we could assess the extent to which ethical journalism adhered to without any impositions. This makes my assessment of individual journalist's orientations meaningful in a way knowing a mind working with lots of interference at least without the will does not give sense.

Verification of stories is also something that significantly affects ethical practices and indicative of value systems and consideration of ethical journalism. This should be one of the areas where journalists' argument and views and applications would be assessed to more understand the problem under investigation. The key concepts and the tone of the story would also speak volume about values and ethical standards if examined between lines.

The analyses of these features would be in relation to ethical journalism values and principles to figure out the consistency of their beliefs and what is reflected in there and identify the current trend of journalism practices.

The third category goes to assessing the journalists' minds. Here the major data collected could be said are responses of journalists from in-depth interviews conducted and survey questionnaires distributed to both the domestic and the Diaspora journalists.

The emphasized areas of questions in the interview guide are organized in such a manner that would assess the core problem of this research project from various angles. It incorporated questions from self regulation tools to universally acceptable values and principles of journalism

ethics, from personal commitment to ethics to factors affecting their job, from self assessment on ethical practices to evaluating others, from hierarchies of various ethical values to the handling of ethical dilemma cases. The advantage for interviewing face to face is that the researcher does have the opportunity to make a follow up questions and seek further explanation for issues that would require so. Therefore the data from the interview contained the major input to get answers for the research questions.

The survey questions are also designed on the bases of the research questions. In order to assess journalists' views and experiences on ethical values and different news approaches, journalists were asked to give their responses for thirteen statements listed which are indicative of various news values and news approaches (deontological and teleological).The Cronbach's alpha measured to see internal consistence and reliability is .796.(for further detail see table 1 of the questionnaire of domestic press attached in the appendices). The responses were measured using a liker scale where it measured the agreement levels of the journalists with statements listed.

In assessing how they do resolve ethical dilemmas in their daily practices of journalism, three case stories were presented in the questionnaire and the respondents were asked to first give their general impression on whether they report or not the stories listed in the case. And after that they were asked to indicate their level of importance for the lists of statements that are believed to be factors influencing the decision. The measurement was a 7 point likert scale. In addition open ended questions that gives opportunity for the respondents to write their own take on the issues have been included. The Cronbach's alpha for case 1 is .998, case 2 is .987 and case 3 is .983.

Pertaining to how they describe the current ethical practices of journalism in Ethiopia, lists of statements containing values like accuracy, relevance, sensationality, depth, objectivity, public trust, fact opinion confusion and diversity were presented and the respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with the statements describing the Ethiopian journalism practices. Open ended questions were also administered to capture the journalists' evaluation of the nation's media in their own words. Cronbach's alpha was measured .640. The same procedure is used to find out factors influencing their values and principles and where they think the source or the background of their value systems. The Cronbach's alpha measured is .989 and .191 respectively. Because the latter was so small and doesn't fit with the recommended values, the section was analyzed on individual bases. The statements used for assessing the factors influencing their values included market forces like advertisements, religious and political affiliations, journalists associations and colleagues while the statements used to assess the background of values included educational background, upbringing, parents and current family life.(For further details see table 8 and 16 of the questionnaire attached in the appendices)

Analyses Procedure

The analyses and the data collection was treated as part of a process going together from the start till the end of this research project as it is advocated by grounded theory approach discussed above. This procedure was established based on the following conceptual categories which themselves are developed through the processes of gathering and analyzing the data.

- 1 approaches to news coverage and ethical codes more or less shared by every journalist and assumed to be universal values and standards of journalism ethics,
- 2 instruments used to self regulate media practices like codes of conducts,
- 3 independence in practicing the profession and personal commitments to ethics
- 4 hierarchies of ethical values and principles in the views and interpretation of journalists,
- 5 factors influencing behavior toward ethical journalism,
- 6 self assessing and evaluating performance of ethical journalism,
- 7 descriptions of the political and legal environments for the press in the country and
- 8 handling ethical dilemmas

As part of the analyses procedure and on the bases of the above mentioned conceptual categories, an assumption by the researcher that the current trend of journalism practices is witnessing three broad categories will also be explored since ultimately the core goal of this project is assessing the trend in its effect for ethical journalism. These three categories of the trend are;

- 1 a trend to use journalism to a cause which is seeking an administration change,
- 2 a trend to use it to keep the status quo and
- 3 a trend that uses journalism to advance individual journalists cause, which is using the safest way in the political system to survive as a journalist.

The data used for analyses was gathered through the following instruments;

1 In-depth interview was conducted with the highest decision making body of the private press institutions, the editors and editor-in-chief, for the final product of their respective publications. This method is chosen for it helps explore issues in detail as the research will have an opportunity to raise follow up questions nod probing that will be a good resource for collecting qualitative data. In addition it will also ‘...put flesh on the bones of questionnaire responses’ (Bell 1993, 91)

2 Survey through questionnaire was distributed to low level journalists from reporters to sub-editors level. The questionnaire helps to gather data from a significant portion of journalists

which otherwise is not possible for the researcher to obtain it. In a way it did also make it possible to have a representative sample of domestic and Diaspora journalists.

3 Cases that contain stories with conflicting values and principles to handle them (ethical dilemmas) were presented to each level of the journalists seeking their views and decision on how they handle each of the cases. Here it is believed that a lot can be inferred from responses for such an ethical dilemma cases. These cases could give the opportunity to explore journalists' views, perceptions and interpretations of values and principles in a greater depth.

4 Content reviews on a selected time of publication with the same news topic were conducted to supplement the rest of the data. These reviews were done in order to support the analyses with latest and practical applications of ethical journalism among the Ethiopian private media. The basic assumption with regard to the state of ethical journalism was taken from the review of related literature discussed in chapter two of this paper which is a rampant unethical performance of the Ethiopian mass media. However in this content review it was planned to supplement the data in order to support the analyses process with the latest practical applications of ethical journalism among Ethiopian journalists. The review was informed by the qualitative content analyses approach of analyzing the data. Qualitative content analyses as Kazuhiro Maeshima (2007, 69) quoting Hofstetter (1981) explain it 'the method literally investigates the texts of the media without quantifying them. Instead, qualitative content analysis explores the tone and impressions of texts. The method permits a scholar to scrutinize the nuances of a particular article or of even a particular sentence. Furthermore, qualitative content analysis permits one to investigate the underlying content in the text or to define the purpose of the text the author intentionally (or sometimes unintentionally) wants to deliver to the readers.'(Hofstetter, 1981)

The approach by Kazuhiro Maeshima in using the storylines and media frames as the key ways of analyses did also inform the content review of this research. Johnson-Cartee's (2005) statement quoted in Maeshima (2007) that said 'Media frames are the narrative structures the news media provide' goes in line with what is being investigated in this research. That is why media frames are chosen to be used in the qualitative content review in this research. 'The media presents frames by providing readers with a fairly common view of the major actors, events and themes. Understanding each particular media frame provides a clue to figure out ways of constructing news stories.'(Kazuhiro Maeshima, 2007, 70). These frames will help clearly see story lines each media is following in the practice of journalism It is possible to infer the values and principles adhered by the media from these story lines. The data obtained from the contents review was used to compare and contrast the results obtained from the data gathered through the other tools and supports the analyses process to be more comprehensive in investigating the problem under investigation.

To put it briefly in this research with an aim of investigating ethical values and principles of journalism in the minds of Ethiopian Journalists, I employed survey of journalists in general, in depth interviews of editors in particular and text analyses of their editorial policy's ,certain

period publications and documents and recordings on issues of journalism ethics in the country. Generally speaking qualitative analyses is the major procedures of analyses in this research. Though there are data gathered which require a quantitative analyses approach, they are only be used to triangulate the research method and will be also analyzed within the frame work of qualitative analyses approach. As Strauss, Anselm L, Corbin and Juliet M (1998) put it this research takes qualitative research as type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. The coding of the data as the authors explain would allow this research analyses to a statistical analyses too. But the entire process is directed toward producing a nonmathematical process of interpretation carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme. (Strauss, Anselm L, etal, 1998).The rationale to choose qualitative analyses for this research is again to borrow words from Strauss, Anselm L, etal (1998, 11) is ‘ qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods.’

The interview questions are designed with a specific aim of understanding why and how news decisions are made as described by journalists themselves. If put in terms of categories, the first group of question are meant to know the cultural backgrounds of the interviewee and how do they become journalists. The processes and the reasons why certain stories are chosen from various options make up the other category of interview questions. And both are typically meant for detecting the values and the value systems in the minds of the individual journalists.

Who they think they are benefiting from their work and the way they measure their successes or effectiveness in achieving it is also assessed through the interview questions. It is not only when they say they are effective but also the way they measure their works within the lenses of ethical values and standards and the way they evaluate others in the profession at an institutional level was also assessed through the in depth interviews. Here their evaluations about others were chosen to be at an institutions level for calling individual journalists’ and institutions’ names might not comfort them. It could also be easy for them to well describe others in an institution level than picking up every single case. But when situations allowed their opinions on single cases were also collected. The kind of stories they think their audiences are looking for and where does that impression come from was also investigated through the interview in the assumption that help understand their values and the perception toward it. Since the interview is done with top level decision making journalists, questions regarding their positions and its impact on their daily job with specific reference to ethical issues were asked. In addition factors which they think are affecting their profession in the context of being ethical are also investigated through the interview. Their views on the political situation of the country where they are working were assessed. Efforts have been made to get their views on the content related and content neutral rules and regulation of the land and its impact on them. Their views on the dominant and universally acceptable values and standards of journalism ethics, like verification

of facts, truth telling, taking sides openly, trying not to harm anyone, applicability of codes of ethics, source treatments was also investigated. As part of this category they were also asked to list what they think are the most important values of their profession have also been collected from the interview. In order to get honest responses from the interviewees they were told that their names will not be used in the paper except that in the analyses phase gender might be used. However names of those who agreed to use their real names will be used.

The survey was done in two ways. It was a hand distributed questionnaire which was used to gather data from the domestic journalists in Ethiopia. This was done for it was the most convenient way of reaching the journalists in a county where internet connection was not satisfactory enough. An online questionnaire using lime survey software was distributed in order to reach the Diaspora journalists where their job is also mainly through the online web. The major task of the questionnaire was also the same with the interview but it is developed for the rest of the journalists below the editor level who are not in a position to decide what could finally be published as news. The questionnaire was designed to follow the conceptual categories developed and listed at the beginning of the discussion on the analyses procedure of this paper.

In this project analyses procedure the first task was collecting responses from various questions forwarded to the journalists through the questionnaire and the in-depth interview with an aim of gathering the necessary data for the areas of focus. Once the responses are gathered efforts were made to map out the ideological foci of the political environment of the nation through liberal and authoritarian political view glasses, and approaches to journalism ethics adhered by individual journalists within the theoretical framework of four approaches of ethics; the deontologist, teleological, virtue-oriented and Afriethics. The contents reviewed, both real news stories published and documents gathered from other sources, was also done within the framework of theoretical explanations for the more or less universally acceptable ethical standards. And of course the comparing and contrasting processes among each of the categories continued to be made until the end of the process or theory saturation point i.e. till it was possible to explore every possible option to better understand the minds of the journalists and their value systems. By doing so, it would be possible to check whether the trend in journalism practices in Ethiopia and abroad can give effect to ethical journalism or not.

In the content analyses section policy documents, meeting recording on journalism ethics, various article published and interviews given by media managers on issues of their profession, minutes from meetings of media representatives in the effort to establish a media council meant for improving ethical practices, media rules and regulation documents, excerpts taken from government officials take on the country's media statuses were all gathered and used as supplementary materials in the whole process including in the analyses of purposively chosen real news stories published in a chosen period of time.

The ethical dilemma category was treated by selected cases of fictiously developed stories based on real stories happened elsewhere. The cases which contained conflicting ethical values and

principles when considered on how to go about their coverage (ethical dilemmas) were presented to each of the journalists and their reactions and handling strategies and decisions on them is detected. Once they are presented with a yes or no answer for each of the cases whether they report them or not, they will be asked to rate their level of agreements with lists of statements which are believed to be bases for their decisions. This measurement is believed to have a deeper insight into the values and principles each of the journalists hold. All the statements listed are developed on the bases of values and principles of ethical journalism that dominantly exist in various codes of conducts universally and in their own media organizations too. The statements are associated with values and principles such as responsibility to inform and serve the society, timeliness, privacy, balance, avoiding or minimizing harm to anyone, truth telling, consequences of new reports, balance, respect for rule of the land and market completion.

The following points can summarize the important points in the process of the analyses procedure;

- 1 Examining responses obtained from in-depth interview made with top level journalists in terms of decision making processes in general and their values and principles in particular,
- 2 Content analyzing selected purposively selected latest news stories reported on the leading domestic and Diaspora media outlets at the same time with the same topic.
- 3 examining self-reported data captured in a manual and electronic online based survey focusing on the values and principles of ethical journalism practices. The web based survey was made to Diaspora Ethiopian journalists while the survey for the Domestic press journalists was done manually.
- 4 examining responses from the case investigation of stories with ethical dilemmas.
- 5 assessing external documents and activities in the country related to the media and press freedom issues in general and with issues of journalism ethics in particular.

Sampling

The in-depth interview

It was a purposive sampling which is used for the in-depth interview in this research project. The samples for the in-depth interview was drawn from journalists who are at the top level of decision making in the final output of their respective press. These top level journalists were chosen for the interview because they take the bigger burden in terms of finally deciding what to publish and not to publish. This would give the researcher a chance of obtaining an in depth insight into values and principles that are adhered by the respective media outlets in general and the editors and editor in chiefs in particular with regard to ethical journalism. This does not mean that the rest of the journalists are not faced with ethical questions at all. But it is to say that, given the difficulty to interview every journalist in the nation, taking the samples from the top level

journalists would help get both the low levels perspectives and views related to final decision making processes. On the other hand because there is the survey which is also part of the research methods employed in this project, it would fill the gap by bringing the views from the rest of the journalists.

Based on the above assumption it was decided to have an in-depth interviews with editor in chiefs of the private press working domestically and abroad on the cyberspace. In addition since it was not possible due to financial and time constraints to interview every chief editor, purposive sampling was made to choose the private press institutions from which their chiefs were interviewed. The basic requirement used was how much the paper is popular and leading in terms of circulation for the domestic and number of visitors recorded for the online sector. Among the media outlets the subjects of this study were those who make their focus on providing news and news related stories. This was done in the belief that news media outlets are much better convenient to detect ethical matters than opinion based outlets.

Based on the above two major criteria five major news paper editor- in- chiefs from the domestic press and five from the online media were interviewed. The number of the press products in Ethiopia specially those that focus on news production are getting less and less due to factors related to the political environment. Therefore the samples taken for the interview in this paper is more than representative. The sampling for the online media outlets was done on the bases of rankings from Alexa.Com. Alexa.com is the leading method of ranking online media popularity around the world. In addition personal observation and my experience in journalism and knowledge about various journalists working in the online were used to purposively select the five media outlets from among the twenty lists ranked on the bases of number of visitors and traffic by alexa.com for the Mid 2010.(see the list below).It was also considered not to take the media outlets which might be affiliated in some ways or another to the same political ideologies so that it is possible to have a representative sample from whichever affiliation the media could be attached to or associated with. But it should be noted that the researcher is not endorsing any affiliations attached to the media. It is just a simple consideration of what is being a widely spoken criticism of affiliation in the sampling process. Here are the top 20 according to Alexa.com rankings;

1EthiopianReview.com	11 ENA.Gov.Et
2Nazret.com	12 Abugidainfo.com
3 Ethiomedia.com	13 Abbaymedia.com
4 Ethioforum.org	14 EthiopiaZare.com
5 Jimmatimes.com	15 CapitalEthiopia.com
6 Tadias.com	16 EthiopiaFirst.com

7 Waltainfo.com	17 AddisVoice.com
8 Aigaforum.com	18 Gadaa.com
9 Addisfortune.com	19 AddisNegeronline.com
10 Ecadforum.com Gadaa.com	20 Opride.com

Ethiopian media associations international have also approved the above ranking.

My personal friendship with journalists in the media industry established from my experience in being a journalist assisted me a lot to approach each of the editors in chiefs I chose to interview. Each of the interviews was done in a more friendly talk and discussion way than in an interview format asking questions and giving responses from the interviewee side. Therefore this helped to further enrich the data. Approximately an hour long interview was conducted with each of the interviewee. All were recorded and transcribed for analyses purposes. The interviewees are at the age between 36 and 50 and with more than ten years of experience in journalism. It should be noted that the journalists do not want to openly express their views and opinions for all the questions I raised. This mostly associated with the political environment they are working in which is also part of this research project assessment. For this reason I chose to follow Kazuhiro Maeshima (2007) way to establish a relationship with my interviewees in a way that builds trust with them. Maeshima quoted Fenno, 1978) to describe the strategies he followed to build trust with interviewees which is ‘the method of anonymity utilized in Richard’. One of the strategies used was telling them that their names won’t get published in this work and the other is explaining about myself and asking my close friends who are closer friends among the interviewees to build the trust. The two strategies I employed help me get more in-depth insights into the problem under investigation. The interview was made between March 2010 and June 2010. But follow up questions were also made until the end of this research project. I exploited my friendship with senior journalists working in the country and abroad to have the follow up questions every time I wanted.

Survey

The survey was done through questionnaire in two ways. The first one was used to survey the domestic journalists. In this case I personally did distribute it to each of the journalists in the sample taken. The sample included almost all the journalists working for the mainstream press in the country. Since the number of major press news based press products are a little more than five and the number of working journalists hired for each of the media outlets do not exceed more than ten, specially working in the news department tried to distribute for fifty journalists which are almost the total number of journalists in the news media. The distribution was done by personally going to each of the offices and approaching each of the journalists, some of them I already know before, and explaining the purpose and the confidentiality of their responses so that trust would be developed between us. It was a success story in that all of them took their time to fill in a questionnaire which has more than hundred questions in sixteen different categories in

fifteen pages. Though it is not advised to make questionnaires longer for respondents might not fully participate I took advantage of my personal relationships with them to convince them participate fully in the project. And it was done the way I wanted and many were even ready to accept me with further follow up questions which I did.

The second survey was done through an electronic questionnaire by using lime survey software. The software does help distribute the questionnaires to the selected sample journalists and report their responses by protecting their names from being exposed. It does also do some statistical calculations concerning relationships, demographics and the like. The selected samples invited to participate in these survey are again chosen by the same criteria for the manual survey. Those who are working in the top leading news based online media outlets are all invited to participate in the survey. Many of the online based news media outlets do work with very few journalists. Therefore the invitation was sent to twenty one journalists and all of them responded. Here also because the questionnaire contains as many questions as the manually distributed do, I used my personal relationship with journalists to facilitate the success of my survey which worked well.

The other important feature in the survey was case investigation of ethical dilemma stories and decisions made on them.

Content Review

The major objective of the content review is to have a confirmed stand on the already researched and proved practices of unethical journalism in the nation. It is mainly used to supplement the analyses part of this research.

The review has also got two categories. The first is done on the actually published selected news stories. The sampling procedure was to find latest stories with a serious issue that has got a lot to do with the country's politics. These kinds of stories clearly indicate the way values and ethical matters are interpreted by each of the media houses reporting them. The other criterion was to have the same topic published at the same time or season across all the main stream media. This would give an opportunity to have comparative analyses where locating differences and similarities would be easier and gives comprehensive picture. Here again five from the domestic and five from the Diaspora media were chosen to select published stories same topic. The numbers of story topics selected are three with special focus on the government and the country's various political activities including the opposition political groups. And special consideration was used to get three different stories from various perspectives. The assumption here is to have a comprehensive picture by reviewing the contents from various perspectives. The chosen stories from the domestic press were collected by buying the newspapers from the domestic publications while the online news stories were simply downloaded for free. It was purposively done that news features and in-depth writings or articles that concern the chosen topic and published together with the news stories at the same time or in closer time period where the story is still hot were used as subjects of analyses. These stories are chosen in order to

even more strengthen the core idea of the research project which in the end would lead to explain the current trend of Ethiopian journalism in relation to Ethical journalism.

According to the Ministry of Information taken from ‘Africa Development Initiative; Ethiopia Context’ there were 68 newspapers and magazines published and distributed in July 2006. This is an increase from five years ago, though figures for 2000 could not be found. There are fifty six newspapers and twelve magazines. Most papers are weeklies, bi-weeklies and monthlies, with only three dailies that are government controlled.

The sample media outlets used for the content review are;

Domestic Newspapers;

1 Ethiopian reporter

2 Awrambatimes

3 Addis Fortune

4 Addis Admass

5 Ethio Channel and

Diaspora online news media

1 Ethiopian Review

2 Ethiomedia

3 Ethiopiafirst

4 Aigaforum

5 Nazreth

Though the researcher does not want to endorse any affiliation which is attached to any of the samples chosen, it was considered in the selection criteria to include papers from each of the affiliation groups in to the subjects of this study so that it is possible to understand how each side of the media is practicing journalism. And in the final analyses it would help draw the existing trend of journalism within the context of values and principles in general and journalism ethics in particular.

In the second category the following documents have been consulted as a supplementary to the other data gathered;

1 a discussion meeting organized by Ethiopian Environmental Journalists Association in Sep 2010 on issues of professional journalism. The speakers were two of the top level journalists in

the two leading newspapers in the country. Tamrat Gebregziabher (Fortune newspaper, managing editor) and Abiy Teklemariam (Addisneger newspaper, managing editor)

2 Article published on the 3rd of Aug 2010-08-03 in one of the leading online news outlet, Ethiopian Review, pertaining to Journalism and freedom of expression.

3 Article published on May 2009 in another leading news paper in Ethiopia, Addis Admass, related to journalism ethics

4 Addis Fortune newspaper editors note on Media law

5 Analyses of Ethiopian Press in Awramba times'es newspaper in Ethiopia.

6 Dr Tewodros Kiros Professor at Berkeley University Professor of Philosophy, article on Ethiopian press published in Awramba Times 150th publication.

7 Commentaries in Aigaforum, an online news media, about Ethiopian Press and bias on 08/20/09 by Nesibu Taye

8 Article on aiga forum again on free press and independence in Ethiopia unspecified date by Sitina from Harar.

9 A radio discussion in Dotche Welle Radio Amharic service in Nov 2011 about the current press and the political environment in Ethiopia among leading Ethiopian Journalist and university scholars

10 The new Ethiopian media and information act and anti-terrorism laws together with sections of the Constitution of the state.

11 European Union observation mission final reports that contain the performance of the Ethiopian media during the 2005 election,

12 Article on freedom of expression in Ethiopia in the Ethiopian review, the leading online news site of the country

13 Interview of Eskkinder Nega, a veteran journalist who used to own various newspapers but banned to run his papers after the controversial election of 2005 from publishing, in Habesha magazine published in the US concerning his views and the press in Ethiopia in February- March 2011 volume 3 no 25 publication

14 Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, take on Media code of conduct prepared by the electoral board of the nation that was meant for governing the media activities during the 2005 election

15 Ethiopian newspapers reaction on the effect of publishing costs rise on March 2011 and its implications on the papers and in the country's politics which are published on various media.

16Tamiru Geda's , popular journalist and an executive memeber of the banned Ethiopian independent journalists association in Ethiopia, commentary on freedom of expression and journalists' integrity.

Chapter Four

The Political Environment

Introduction

This chapter is meant for describing the political environment in the country with regards to press freedom and journalism practices by relating it to the online journalism practices. To the researchers knowledge Ethiopian online journalism lacks literature on its historical backgrounds and various activities. The researcher chose to discuss its activities in a greater depth with specific focus on its journalistic role and ethical tentes. The best way to do so would be to relate it to the countrys political environment which is the main cause for its proliferation in recent decades. In addition much of its activities with regard to ethical practices tend to be influenced by the political environment in the nation. Therefore as a way of describing the country's political environment and the online journalism practices, it was chosen to approach the investigation from the perspective of assessing the impact of the online media on the political environment and press freedom in the nation. The assumption here is that political environment is greatly impacting ethical journalism practices in the private media even when they are working it far away from the environment like the online journalism among Ethiopian journalists living abroad in the western world do.

The digital era is obviously creating a unique opportunity for the advancement of freedom of expression around the world in a way that has never been before. This unique opportunity is giving a hard time for political regimes who managed to easily deny their own people from freely expressing their thoughts, needs, feelings and aspirations as long as they found it a threat to their power. Recently we have witnessed revolutions going on in the Arab world where the digital era has proved that it comes with unique opportunities for people to freely express and share their thoughts which in effect bring people together for the same cause and assist them to making history. What was difficult for more than three decades in some Arabian countries like Egypt became possible with a significant contribution of the cyberspace. The digital era is also immensely contributing to widen the public sphere for people to actively participate and to be aware of their country's affairs of various natures; political, economic and social. Especially in those parts of the world where freedom of expression is suppressed and countries are ruled by dictatorial regimes, the digital era has come with a strong tool for the battle to secure freedom of expression.

In this paper I tried to investigate how the digital era is impacting freedom of expression in general and journalism practices in particular with special emphases on political systems that are believed to suppress freedom of expression. Though freedom of expression is a right applicable to all sections of a society, it could be argued that it has been highly associated with journalism practices. The reason for the strong relationship between the two arises from the nature of journalism profession. Since journalism is an application of freedom of expression by a certain

organization or an individual in a way that reaches masses of people at a time, it would be on the spot light for the major controversies raised with regard to freedom of expression. Particularly dictatorial regimes always take measures that could weaken or vanish independent journalism practices in their respective countries when they think of it to be a threat to their power. Though they do also take measures in other areas and professions too to suppress freedom of expression, it won't be comparable to how much they are careful and serious in handling journalism in their nation. They are doing so because as Guy Berger (2007:1) puts it 'press freedom is ultimately about the right to send and receive critical information about the realities of public power and against the wishes of those in power'. This alone speaks volume on the extent to which journalism and freedom of expression seems sometimes to be alternative names for each other.

This paper investigated the extent to which the digital era in its one form of manifestations, online journalism, created a unique opportunity in advancing freedom of the press in the developing world taking Ethiopia as case in point. The assessment was done within the context of political regimes that are believed to suppress freedom of expression.

Research Questions

The following specific research questions are addressed to have a full picture of the problem under investigation. And all the questions are dealt with taking Ethiopia as a case in point.

- 1 how does online journalism is impacting wider political environment for generic press freedom? What are its manifestations?
- 2 what are the ways and the formats the journalists are using in the online media to exploit the new opportunity the digital era has to offer in their battle to exercise freedom of the press?
- 3 To what extent do the old(er) media use new platforms to amplify the space and extend the impact of their journalism in regard to press freedom?
- 4 what are the distinctive features of online journalism that describes Ethiopian online journalism?
- 5 what are the challenges faced by oppressed journalists to fully exploit the digital era's new opportunities?

Clarification of Terms

It would be more helpful to put the perspective of this paper in understanding what constitutes to Online Journalism and who is a journalist since a lot of controversy is already around in defining online journalism. In this paper the emphases is given on the technological aspect of the profession in simply accepting and adopting the rest of the characteristics of traditional journalism already existed. This paper bases its perspective on what online journalism is and who its journalist is on the Scholl (1996: 335) and Deuze's (1999) perspectives. Their perspective is read as 'journalists are those individuals working within an editorial board or

newsroom (be it full-time or freelance) who perform one of four core journalistic tasks: selecting, researching (or: gathering), writing (or: processing) and editing news more or less exclusively for the World Wide Web'

The above statement defines both what an online journalism is and who the journalist is. According to the authors definition a journalistic task performed in the online web is taken as online journalism and individuals performing it are journalists on the bases of the core featured mentioned to describe Journalism tasks.

In short, this refers to editors and reporters working within an online newsroom of a media outlet and/or organization. An editorial board or newsroom is an independent working unit within a media organization - whereas a media organization can be referred to on two levels as a broadcast, print, cable or online media outlet and as a media organization incorporating more than one media outlet.

It can be observed from their perspective above that what is emphasized as an additional point from the traditional journalism characteristics is the technological aspect.

This paper has adopted the view mentioned above in investigating the role of online journalism in advancing freedom of the press in an oppressive political environment.

Methodology

The methodological approach employed for this investigation and analyses is based on the grounded theory approach. In line with the core idea of grounded theory this paper tried to find out a theoretical explanation of the problem under investigation that could emerge from the empirical data. The data was gathered simultaneously with the analyses of the already gathered data until a point of saturation is reached where no more data seems to be there to explain the problem under investigation.

In other words the purpose of this study is to relate theoretical concepts to empirical material. But it is not in the standard assumption of simply testing a theory by empirical research. Rather it is based on the idea of grounded theory as it is defined by Steen Steensen (2010). Steen based on the assumption by the American philosopher of science Peirce (see Burks, 1946) sees the idea of grounded theory in light of abduction. Abduction according to Steen (2010, 33) involves 'the pragmatist attitude of finding the best possible (theoretical) explanation of a phenomenon by reasoning. It is an attitude that neither aims at producing general theory, nor at explaining phenomena in light of general theory. It is a hermeneutic approach implying that theory is constantly revised by new empirical material. It allows for a thorough analysis of empirical material without being restrained by preconceived theoretical concepts or by attempts at generating macro theoretical concepts.' But here it should be noted that the idea does not mean not using preconceived ideas or theories in ones study. Rather it is an idea of grounding of established theoretical concepts.

Analyses Procedure

The first thing done as a procedure of analyses was trying to map the political environment of the country under investigation, Ethiopia, with a particular focus on the existing political environment for the freedom of the press. This was chosen to be the first phase for it is not possible to talk about the impact of online journalism on the battle against freedom of the press without clearly describing the political environment for the press in the nation.

In this phase of the analyses various empirical evidences were utilized in order to cross examine the general description of the existing environment the press is working in. Here a range of empirical evidences were gathered that are believed to show what is going on in the country with regard to freedom of the press. An emphasis was given for evidences that are believed to be universally acceptable and are made by internationally recognized organizations and associations in their independent assessments of issues and widely used as a reference to show or describe events happening in a certain country. Ethiopian Journalists take on the issue was also used as a major source of evidence since they are the major stake holders of the problem under investigation..

Once the mapping of the political environment is completed the next phase was to figure out where the digital era can be put within the context of the already described press environment in the nation. In this phase of the analyses efforts were made to show the interaction between the political environment in the nation and the opportunities the digital era brought with it. And the particular focus among the digital era's opportunities' is given to online journalism. In this phase figuring out the distinctive features of the online journalism in its contribution toward freedom of expression is also analyzed within the context of its interaction with the political environment.

The Data and Collection Tools

The data collection was done in two major categories. The first category used interview's to collect the necessary data on journalists take on the existing press environment in their country. The interview was done with journalists on the domestic press and the cyberspace. The interview was conducted in the assumption that journalists' take on the existing press conditions in the country in relation to the digital era's opportunities would be significantly important to answer the research questions of this research project. Therefore the interview questions were designed in such a way that could help find out journalists views, reactions and suggestions on the political environment they are working in relation to the impact of online journalism on the existing environment of the press freedom in Ethiopia.

The second category can be taken as a Ready Made data where texts, audios and video materials were gathered that are believed to have their major focus on the problem being investigated. These groups of data is mainly taken from the researchers archive collected over the last two years for the purpose of another research project meant for studying media ethics. It did also include recent materials that are collected while working on this paper. A one month consecutive

publications of online news websites was also made to be used as data for the analyses purposes in line with the stated research questions.

You would find lists of materials consulted and used as empirical evidence in the following section where sampling is discussed.

Sampling

In the process of gathering data through the interview the major criteria put in place to choose who to interview was the position of the journalist in the media institution where the journalist is working. It is, as it is the case in many parts of the world, the senior journalists in the decision making body of the profession like the editor in chief who are more susceptible to influences of political environments in the nation than any other journalist in the hierarchy of responsibilities in the profession. Senior level journalists with a decision making power on the final version of stories and/or articles published are taken as samples of the research subjects for this research.

The second criterion for the interview focuses on which media to choose the journalists from. Here purposive sampling techniques have been employed and two popular major domestic private press products and four from the online news media outlets based abroad have been taken as subjects. The number does not seem to be balanced because actual numbers of domestic press products who uses the online media outlets are by far lower than the Diaspora based online outlets. In addition the trend for using online journalism in finding a way to escape from the political influences is mainly concentrated in the Diaspora based online news outlets. Therefore for the purpose of getting a better picture for the problem under investigation it was decided to take more samples from the Diaspora based online media outlets. Allegations on the online media outlet in taking sides either for or against the government have also be taken into account to include websites from both sides of which they are alleged to favor to. The leading websites are identified by their number of readers which is rated by the popular web based rating company named Alexa.com. According to Alexa.com 2010 rankings the two domestic press products with an online extensions of their publications and the four leading Diaspora based online media outlets among the leading 20 purposively selected as samples of this study are;

1 Ethiopianreporter.com

2 Addisfortune.com

3 Ethiomedia.com

4 Ethiopianreview.com

5 Aigaforum.com

6 Ethiopiafirst.com.

The above listed websites are not only serving as subjects of this study to take journalists for the interview but also as subjects for their contents to be analyzed for their forms and formats in making use of the web to exercise freedom of the press.

The second group of data was taken from secondary sources. They are secondary in a sense that they are not necessarily, though there are many of them, directly organized and collected for the purpose of this paper. Otherwise these texts, audios and video materials could be considered as direct sources for their content is directly related to the problem under investigation. And the major criterion of the sampling is to gather such data which is directly focusing on either the environment for press freedom in the nation and/or Ethiopian online journalism. These materials mainly include journalists especially senior editor level journalists take on issues of press freedom in the nation and way outs to fight it, universally recognized press releases and reports on the country's performance of freedom of expression in general and press freedom in particular, panel discussion organized by radio stations and/or nongovernmental association on the same issues, laws and regulations of the country with major focus on freedom of expression and practices of journalism in the nation, articles written by scholars and various sections of the societies on the matter under discussion and published on various newspapers and editorials by various media outlets written on issues of press freedom in the nation and expressing their stands on each case. These materials include data gathered over the period of the last two years for the purpose of my research project aiming at studying media ethics.

Ethiopia and Private Press

Ethiopia is a country in the eastern part of Africa with nearly 80 million people .It is among the developing world with controversial political system running the nation. The country is now ruled by the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF, a party in power for 20 years. The party came to power after it over threw the Derg regime in 1992.

Though the beginning of the Press publications can be traced back to the Regime of Emperor Menlik (1844-1913) in the early days of the 20th century, the flourishing of the private press was not as advanced as it is until the last two decades after the incumbent regime took over power.

Over the last 20 years especially during the first fifteen years, Private press products were growing both in quality and quantity. According to a print media Journal of the Ethiopian Press Organization, there were more than 95 newspapers, among them 76 are private, 8 are government and 5 of them belong to political parties before 2005. The first ten to fifteen years of the decade was a time where various private press products highly critical of the government were able to publish their stories and sell it to the public. However there seems to be a recent trend that private press products with critical contents on government activities face difficult political environment. It was observed that after the 2005 controversial election some 8 newspapers are banned by the government and became out of the scene. In addition one of the popular weekly newspaper started publishing after this 2005 controversial election quit and all its

journalists and editors are now living in exile claiming threats from the government if they continue publishing their paper in the country. On the contrary newspapers and magazines making their focus on entertainment and light issues are observably working with no interferences and seems to be growing in number.

Concerning the ownership of the private press, Shimelis Bonsa's survey of the private press in Ethiopia indicated that '... Newspapers were, in most cases, owned, run and controlled by people for whom the paper was a source of livelihood, a profit-generating venture and/or a political instrument (Shimelis, 2000:26). This has remained to be the dominant case until recently.

Ethiopia and Press Freedom

Freedom of expression in general and press freedom in particular is a constitutionally guaranteed right in Ethiopia. Article 29 of the constitutions gives guarantees for rights of thought, opinion, freedom of expression and the press in the following terms.

1. Everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression without interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice.
3. Freedom of the press and other mass media and freedom of artistic creativity is guaranteed. Freedom of the press shall specifically include the following elements:
 - a) Prohibition of any form of censorship
 - b) Access to information of public interest.

The controversy comes with the actual practice of journalism in the country and with laws passed by the ruling party's literally fully controlled parliament that concerns the press. The first one is the newly promulgated press law and which is already passed as a law and criticized by journalists in the country and international journalists' association and various human right advocate groups. In addition laws which are not directly meant for the press but significantly affecting the press were passed and become highly controversial. The anti terrorist law is a case in point. The following sections briefly discuss various views on such laws that are believed to suppress freedom of expression in general and the press in particular.

Journalists' take on

Ethiopian Private Press journalists have been at various occasions mentioning their worries and concerns on the status of press freedom in the nation. These journalists were heard criticizing the existing political environment to be against press freedom. Some wrote and are still writing editorials in their paper calling for the government to improve the situation and work for the better development of press freedom in the nation.

Journalists who were interviewed for the purpose of this paper have expressed their concerns and deep frustrations on the existing political environments clouding press freedom in the nation on condition of anonymity.

Both group those who spoke on condition of anonymity and those who openly express their views on various stages, do believe that Journalism and press freedom in the nation is going through tough times and discouraging environment for the flourishing of free press. Some say the laws are clearly dangerous and some went beyond the law and mentioned their fear of the informal and subtle way of suppression going on in the country. Self censorship in fear of the possible consequence of their stories takes the dominant source of frustration among the existing private press journalists in the nation. Dawit kebed is founder and managing editor of a weekly newspaper called Awrambatimes. He said that "there are times where we journalists should not only careful about the laws and rules but also whether the stories make government officials happy or not" One can learn from what Dawit had to say that there might also be an informal way of putting pressure on the independence of the press. Abiy Teklemariam and Tamrat negera both from the weekly newspaper 'Addis Neger' do have the same feelings about the press condition in the country The two journalists chose to give even more emphases on the problems of indirectly imposed self regulation. Tamrat Negera did not deny that "physical censorship" do not exist in the country. He rather gives emphases on the environment that imposes lack of full freedom that journalists are supposed to enjoy as it is witnessed in the liberal world. According to him there are issues where the existing political environment forces you to be reserved from writing about. And these issues as one can understand from what Tamrat wanted to say are those critical enough stories to challenge the status quo in the eyes of the ruling class. In other words issues that might threaten the monopoly of power from the point of view of the holders of the people in power could bring bad consequence for the journalists. These consequences, as it is observed more often in the nation, might be staying behind bars or forced to live in exile not to mention harassments that are reported more frequently by various human right advocates and journalists associations as it is discussed in the following sections of this paper

Abiy Teklemariam managing editor from the same paper does share Tamrat's assertion. He claims fear of going to jail and worrying and being suspicious on what is going to happen afterwards are what is keeping journalists busy while working and writing on a story and for him this is a peculiar challenge of the private press in Ethiopia. CPJ did also confirm fear of other journalists in the same way the above quoted journalists feel.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a universally recognized press freedom advocate organization in a letter it wrote to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi in the 23rd of July 2009 to use his influence to reverse what they put as a repressive environment for the press and journalists explained a little bit in detail about where the fear comes from. The letter quoted Ethiopian journalists their names are withheld for their fear of reprisals from the government as saying they '...received phone calls and warnings from officials and government supporters to censor their coverage'.

Tamrat Gebregiorgis managing editor for the weekly business newspaper in an interview I had with him puts the condition in a different perspective. Tamrat agreed that there is a problem and sees it from a cultural point of view. For him he sees people in power as part of the society who are suffering from cultural problem of believing in controlling, blocking and denying as a solution for every problem they are faced with. Tracing its cause with a cultural problem in the society, Tamrat did also agree with the presence of a difficult political environment in the nation for journalism practices. Whatever the source of the problem might be his views are also another proof of the existing political environment in the country.

Melaku editor in chief of another popular weekly newspaper, Reporter, in an interview with the researcher did also express his concerns about the much criticized anti terrorism law which is in effect in July 2010. The law contains provisions that will impact the media by making journalists and editors potential accomplices in acts of terrorism if they publish statements seen as encouraging or supporting terrorist acts, or even, simply, political protest. He is very concerned that the law makes journalists think again and again to the extent that you get frustrated and decide to write nothing which according to him can be equated with quitting journalism. And for him such forms of self censorship would only encourage people to leave their profession. Melaku though he mentioned as an instance the anti terrorism law, he agreed with other journalists' description of the existing problematic environment clouded the press in Ethiopia.

Press Freedom and Human Rights Advocates Take On

One of the internationally reputable human right advocates is the Human Rights Watch. Human Rights watch in its 2010 annual report on Ethiopia further strengthens complaints of the working journalists' discussed in the previous section. The report said 'The space for independent media activity in Ethiopia remains severely constrained'

Article 19, a UK based international non government human rights organization working to protect and promote freedom of expression and freedom of information commented on the anti terrorism law and its impact on the freedom of expression in Ethiopia. In this analytical comment the organization concluded that 'sections of the Proclamation undermine international protections on freedom of expression. Of particular concern is the broad definition of terrorism, which would appear to apply to many legitimate acts of expression; the undermining of protection of journalists sources including by surveillance and an excessive duty to cooperate and provide information; and vaguely defined provisions on "encouraging" terrorism that would criminalize the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression and have a real chilling effect on debate on matters of public interest'. Article 19 not only takes the anti terrorism law as the only problem with the country's press and freedom of expression. In the introduction page of the news it posted on the 29th of March 2010 when it conducted a training on building the capacity of professionals on legal issues for Ethiopia and Kenya, it stated that '....increasingly restrictive laws are being passed in Ethiopia to control civil society organizations and there are concerns about the Ethiopian Government's commitment to freedom of expression in the country'.

CPJ, a non profit organization working to promote freedom of the press worldwide by defending the rights of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal in a letter it wrote to President of Ethiopia after the new press law was passed in July 2008 expressed its concerns that a number of the sections of the law allow the government to restrict the independent media and it leaves intact the existing repressive statutes which make it fall well short of international standards. The committee demanded the President to reject the law and send it back to lawmakers for revisions. In another letter it sent to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, on the 23rd of July 2011 it expressed its concerns about the anti terrorism law in the nation to further restricts press freedom. In this letter CPJ expressed its concerns in what it claims to exist in the country an ongoing pattern of criminal prosecutions, administrative restrictions, and Internet censorship. CPJ is also concerned about the monopolistic control of the internet service by the Ethiopian government. As it indicated In its recent special report by Danny O'Brien, May 2, 2011, titled, 'The Ten Tools of Online Oppressors', mentioning Ethiopia as a case for one of the tools that uses monopolistic control of the net to suppress freedom of expression.

IFJ is an international federation of journalists which according to its home page has 600 000 members from over 100 countries around the world. This organization promotes international action to defend press freedom and social justice through strong, free and independent trade unions of journalists. And as part of the stated objective it follows the press condition in Ethiopia and tries to put an influence to reverse any moves it believes suppress press freedom in the nation. Alike the other press freedom advocates mentioned above IFJ is also concerned about the press freedom in Ethiopia.

In reaction to the above various international organizations and Ethiopian journalists concerns of oppressive political environment for the press freedom in the country, the government rejects all the accusations and insists in arguing all the policies and the laws in the country are meant for enhancing the efforts to develop democracy in the nation. According to the government of Ethiopia the rules and any activities the government is involved in can only be against irresponsible journalists. In the meeting he had with Federation for African journalists' (FAJ) leadership Prime Minister of the nation, Meles Zenawi, explained his government's readiness to support discussions on how to create a viable form of self-regulation to build public trust in media. He also said that more than 100 journalists currently in exile had nothing to fear from coming home. Legal actions had been dropped and there would be no action taken against them. In what shows to be the government's big concern the Prime Minister told the delegates of FJA his government any longer plays the game of democracy without acting responsibly. It seems that all the stake holders in the country including journalists themselves agree on ethical problems in the country's journalism. However the government's argument on irresponsible media doesn't sound to be acceptable when it is tried to compare and contrast the measures believed to be taken on journalists with promulgation of laws with that of internationally acceptable standards and necessary environment in a modern democracy. IFJ in August 28 2008

expressed its concern on the existing environment for the press freedom in the country as uncertain and its African branch chief Gabriel Baglo (2008) said ‘The government should engage dialogue most especially with the independent media in order to improve press freedom and working conditions of journalists for ethical journalism in Ethiopia,’ The IFJ report on the specified day has the following to say in its description of press environment in Ethiopia:

‘A mission of the IFJ and the Eastern Africa Journalists Association to Ethiopia two weeks ago noted that the media landscape in Ethiopia is still rocky, as up to about eight newspapers that were closed during the November 2005 crackdown are still being denied licenses to operate. A number of Ethiopian journalists in exile are still afraid to return home for fear of reprisals. The New Media Law passed by the parliament on July 2 was said to be repressive by independent Ethiopian journalists with harsh penalties related to libel; others journalists objected to the inclusion of the Freedom of Information Bill within the media law.’ (IFJ: 2008)

IFJ did also express its concern in 01 April 2010 that the government is taking hostile measures against the press mentioning two instances, the jamming of the Voice of America Amharic service and the adoption of the controversial media guideline prepared by the national electoral board of the nation which was meant for serving in the 2010 national election. Media observers, according to IFJ, say ‘these rules are repressive, unconstitutional and anathema to press freedom’

Reporters without borders another internationally recognized body for freedom of expression do also share what the above mentioned institutions has to say on the state of press freedom in the nation. This organization is also concerned on the government’s move to ‘...have been tightening their grip on news and information in the last months.’ The organization further stated that ‘Ethiopia has joined the list of sub-Saharan countries that are keeping a close eye on the media and are trying to control or influence editorial policies. Due to their increasing intolerance, the authorities are doing everything they can to stifle the critical impulses of journalists and to make life difficult for the private media.’ (IFEX, 2011)

What exactly is happening on Journalists and the private media?

To begin with the latest moves, the government recently, in May 2010, officially declared that it is going to use all possible means available to jam the voice of America radio broadcast service in Amharic, the official language of the nation. This service is officially accused by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, as irresponsible media working to destabilize the country. He admitted in the same day he gave orders to take every possible measure to stop the media from being heard in the nation. As it can be expected media observers ,journalists associations and press freedom advocates around the world condemned the act In another move of the same type Ethiopian satellite television, ESAT, the first television station broadcasted from abroad to Ethiopian audiences in the nation through the Arab sat was also jammed after a brief period of service on air in May 2010. The station is still fighting to break government jamming techniques but it seems to be difficult where it was believed that the government is using Chinese

technology which are said to be efficient for their purpose. The government tried to justify its moves by accusing the stations of irresponsible behavior and involved in ⁴‘destabilizing propaganda’ in the nation. The station is rumored to be run by the major opposition group leaders who are living in exile and categorized by the government as terrorists and enemies of the nation though the group denied its control of the media.

The problem here is one would find it very difficult to understand government accusations for there seems to be no detailed explanation is around on what they mean by irresponsible media behavior or destabilizing propaganda. It appears to be there is a trend of judging what is right and wrong only from the government point of view and stake holders in the media industry doesn’t seem to be consulted and even there, to my knowledge, was no effort made to at least convince other sectors of the society on what they are worried about the media outlets they are jamming. It does not seem to be exaggeration if one blames the government to play as the accuser and the judge at the same time. In other words it seems quite easily possible to blame the government for all the moves it is taking as mere instruments of avoiding critical voices from being reached to the masses.

Internet blockage is another case in point. The government through its monopoly of controlling the telecommunication and internet service sector is often accused of blocking homepages of vocal critics of the government. The Committee to Protect Journalists, CPJ, posted the following in its assessment of the internet blocking in the nation which is written by Mohammed Keita (2008).It reads ‘Web sites, particularly foreign-based independent sites and blogs discussing political reform and human rights, have been blocked on a recurring basis in Ethiopia since the government cracked down on free media following disputed elections in 2005.’ In 2007, [OpenNet](#) said it has gathered "overwhelming evidence" that Ethiopia was among the nations worldwide restricting the Internet access of its citizens.

There are also accusations of the government denying licenses to practice journalism in the country for some former Ethiopian journalists. Especially after the crackdown on privately owned newspapers following the controversial 2005 national election about eight newspapers were taken out of the scene and are still unable to operate. One of the fastly popular newspapers which was established after the election and believed to be critical of the government activities stopped publishing after few years’ service in 2009 and almost all its journalists including its managing editor and chief editor went into exile. They said they went to exile for fear of reprisal which they were sure was about to happen if they couldn’t have managed to escape from it. According to *Karen Phillips* citing CPJ report there are 34 journalists are in exile since 2001. There are still continuing complaints of journalists being intimidated not to freely practice journalism. Dawit kebede Managing editor and founder of Awrambatimes newspaper has complained to

⁴ this was said by the prime minister of the country Meles Zenawi. You can read further on the matter from the BBC news coverage of the issue from the following link which was retrieved on the 6th of May 2011 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8575749.stm>

the Ethiopian Postal Service at least three times since June 6, 2010 after finding opened and destroyed envelopes in its mailbox inside the national postal headquarters in the capital, Eskinder Nega another long time journalist who has been already denied license to operate journalism in the country opted to continue writing for online based news sites while he is still living in the country. He recently complained that on 11 February 2011, police officers briefly arrested him as he left an Internet cafe and took him to central police headquarters. Eskinder Nega has been accused of tacitly calling on the country to rise up against the government, following the footsteps of Tunisia and Egypt in his articles posted on various news websites based abroad.

What one can learn from the above discussed issues on the concerns and worries of Ethiopian Journalists which is shared by various believed to be independent freedom of expression and the press advocates, the political environment the country's press is working in is not at all conducive free practices of the press.

If we consider the above empirical evidences describing the existing press freedom environment and try to see it in the context of theories of the press, we would find out that the existing press freedom environment would fall into, if not totally, the category of Authoritarian theory of the press. This theory is among the popular four theories of the press developed by Frederick S. Siebert in 1963. The major features of the theory are as follows

- Direct governmental control of the mass media
- Media are not allowed to print or broadcast anything which could undermine the established authority; any offense to the existing political values is avoided
- Government may punish anyone who questions the state's ideology

The above features though they might not fully be able to describe the situation in Ethiopia; they are the best descriptions for it from among the rest of the four theories of the press by Siebert. On the bases of the empirical data presented in the previous sections of this paper, it is observable that the government tries to control of the mass media both directly and indirectly. It is directly controlling the state owned media and indirectly trying to control the private press through various instruments including rules and regulations and an imposition of fearful environment on working journalists. Journalists forced to leave in exile, banned from running their own newspapers, Jamming of radio and TV broadcasts, blocking of internet are all manifestations of the authoritarian theory's features in not allowing journalism practices which undermine the established authority and punishing anyone who questions the state's ideology.

Where is the Digital media in this context?

The cyberspace as the case might be for other countries journalists suffering from the same problem is serving as a safe haven for to freely practice journalism. There are ,according to the authors research, more than 100 online journalism related text, audio and/or video based websites either fully or partially doing journalism works, excluding websites of Political

organizations, government and non government agencies and others whose primary objective is far away from journalism practices and merely involved in promoting their organization and its causes.

The choices of websites for this investigation of locating online journalism's role in advancing freedom of the press is based on the profession's broader definition which put a person or an organization under the category of a journalist if its task is collecting, writing, editing, and presenting of news or news articles on the web. Some of them are using the websites as an extension of their domestic press products while others use it as their only tool of practicing journalism. The majority of these websites are based in the United States and Europe. The focus of this paper is on the mainly news based sites who are mainly involved in journalism practices as it was indicated in its broader definition above. It is observed that the majority of this news based online media outlets are emerged and flourished as a result of the political environment in the nation.

How Does it Impact Freedom of the Press?

As a starting point for the analyses of how the online journalism is impacting freedom of the press in Ethiopia, the four key characteristics of online journalism as discussed in the work of Bardoel, Jo, Deuze, Mark (2001) are taken into account. These are interactivity, customization of content, hypertextuality and multimediaity.

Interactivity is a feature where the online journalism is giving a space for audiences to interact with the news in various ways. It could be in directly and right away commenting on news stories or sending feedbacks afterwards. This feature does also create opportunities for audiences to have contact with journalists in a number of ways, emails can be cited as one. It can even go further and give a chance to create contacts between the main subjects of a story and the audiences. In general it can be said that this feature allows active participation of the audiences with daily journalism products and activities.

In its another characteristic the online journalism have created opportunities for the media organizations and individual audiences to have a better communication mechanisms which is stated as customization of contents by Bardoel, Jo, and Deuze, Mark. Individuals are now able to choose stories they want to read and the media organizations use technological capabilities to provide them with their choices in reducing the burden from the audiences not to choose from all the products in their web. It can be through the online archive, subscription of news stories pushed to individual computers or option to create his or her own homepage at the search- or news site.

Hypertextuality is another key feature that comes into play. This in the words of Bardoel Jo and Deuze Mark is 'offering information about information'. In this feature journalists and/or media organizations do have the opportunity to link original sources of their stories and/or any material which they choose to connect the link with their audiences. It has also given a chance for using a

kind of format where it is possible to serve various interests of the audiences in terms of those who would want to read brief sections of a story and those who need the details. Various linking options depending on the creativity and/or the interest of the journalist or the media organization are now available in an online journalism practices. This feature brought with it arguments like the media is shifting from watch dog to 'guidedog' as it is named by Black, J. (1997) cited in Bardoel, J and Deuze, M (2001). As the name guidedog speaks for itself, this digital era could also make it possible to have journalists who can simply guide to sources of information than trying by themselves to make original and exclusive stories.

The fourth feature is Multimediality. Here the online journalism is equipped with technological capabilities of combining texts, audios and videos for a single story if you like. It is now possible that any format of journalism products be it textual, audio or video can be presented in one web page with links leading to the choice of the audiences.

The analyses presented below in various sections took the key characteristics of online journalism discussed above. A Special attention was given to use this features to assess how of the online journalism is impacting freedom of the press in politically not unfavorable environment.

Issues hardly covered at home

One of the areas where the Ethiopian online media outlets especially those who are identified by Alexa.com (an international websites ranking company) as top visited Ethiopian websites are exploiting the opportunity brought by digital era are covering issues that are critical of the government activities in the country. These issues though it cannot be said are not covered by the domestic private press, the intensity, depth, frequency and tone of the issues in the online media are quite stronger and highly critical of the government which otherwise could have been leading journalists to stay behind bars or leave the country. For instance if we would look at the two leading websites that are subjects of this paper ,Ethiomedial and Ethiopianreview, involved in journalism activities as it is used in this paper, it would be easily observable that significant portion if not all of their coverage are quite critical of the government. These papers' publications for 4 consecutive weeks from April 1 to May 30th of 2011 have assessed for the purpose of this research. Topics and major summary of the news stories or articles given coverage by each of the papers in terms of headlines ,key contents of the story's and their tone were used for the assessments to figure out how much critical coverage are entertained in each of the papers. The results from this investigation indicated that significant portion of the websites ,if not all, are highly critical of the government in questioning major moves taken by the government in political, social and economic affairs of the nation. The issues range from the government's handling of agricultural land uses to administration of private higher education institutions, from Political rights to fair employment opportunities of citizens. And compared with the same type of issues managed to get coverage in the domestic private and government press products there is a big and observable difference both in quantity and depth of the critics.

Though there are critical stories published in few private press products working in the country, it can never be comparable with the online media's coverage span. No doubt coverage of issues with such details and tone would not be welcome and tolerable in the press working in the country given the existing press environment in the nation as it is discussed above. The way these issues are covered by the online media in terms of formats and key characteristics of online journalism is discussed under the section Key features of online Journalism later in this paper.

On the other hand the digital era has also witnessed the government's new way of battling with the flourishing critical views using the online media opportunities. In addition to avoidance of access to such websites to Ethiopian living in the country through banning of websites as it is empirically proved from various reports above, there are online media outlets merely involved in gathering and disseminating news stories and articles of various nature that are in direct contrast with the above mentioned websites and are dedicated in covering only government side stories and critical of the opposition camp. For instance an assessment was conducted for the same period on two other websites, Aigaforum and Ethiopiafirst. It was learnt from the assessment that significant portion of this websites found out to be reactions for the websites critical of the government's activities. It is easily deductible from this trend that the government is also using the same strategy to wedge war of words to fight back those critical views. Though this trend do definitely have its impact in spoiling journalism practices because the websites are claiming to be involved in journalism tasks, on the other hand seen from other perspectives it would be argued that the web is opening ways for free flow of ideas no matter what the ideas are favoring to. Therefore the government is also indirectly encouraged to involve in this political sphere. But this cannot be simply attributed to a positive development for it seems also fuelling unethical practices of journalism in the nation which can by itself be an area of further investigation. But the focus of this paper will remain to be only on the impact of the online media on freedom of expression and the press. However it does also recognize that unethical practices of journalism would have its own influence on the type of impact the online media could have on freedom of the press.

The above findings would lead to a conclusion that the online media outlet is extensively used by Ethiopian journalists to cover issues of various nature which otherwise could have been impossible in the domestic press. Therefore one can conclude that online journalism is greatly serving in being a way out for free flow of ideas including those feared by regimes to threaten their power monopoly.

A battle to secure Freedom of expression and the Press

This section is about how the online journalism is involved in the battle to secure freedom of the press in Ethiopia. Based on the assessment of the leading websites that are subjects of this study, Ethiomedia, Ethiopianreview, Ethiopianreporter, Aigaforum, Addisfortune and Ethiopiafirst, selected from both the domestic press and from abroad involved in online journalism activities indicated that online journalism is used as one of the major instruments used to advocate and

bring a policy change on the press freedom in Ethiopia. These are the ways in which the online media is battling to secure freedom of expression in the nation as identified by the assessments of the contents from the listed websites

1 Publication of recent reports by international human right organizations, journalists associations, press freedom advocate groups and organizations on the existing situation of freedom of expression and press in the country.

2 postings of various articles from various sections of the society on issues of freedom of expression and Ethiopia.

3 Writing editorials and explaining their standpoints on the issue.

4 publishing news stories of their own or linking other sources about freedom of the press in the country

5 interviewing journalists who claim to be victims of the situation and posting follow up stories on the matter extensively.

The battle for securing freedom of the press is done in two camps, according to this research finding, for and against the government. What should be highlighted here as the main objective of this research is that the online media is greatly impacting free flow of ideas even on issues of this nature? Therefore it can be concluded that the online media is serving the purpose of freedom of expression in the face of a controversial press freedom in the nation.

The battle for securing press freedom in these websites is witnessed in their continuous and enormous efforts in exposing the press condition in Ethiopia. The editorial writings written by their articles, human right and other international advocates of freedom of expression reports and press releases, prominent figures take on the existing political, economical and social conditions of the press and freedom of expression are among the issues getting wide coverage by these online media outlets.

Mobilizing

This section is a discussion somehow related to the above section. But here the issues that are used as a way of mobilizing the public are mainly focuses on issues that controversial in the political system in the country. The same media outlets on their contents on the specified period April 1st to May 30th were used to asses and analyze how the online media is being used as a mobilizing tool.

The following are identified as major ways and issues of mobilization in the assessment done in this research

1 calls for public gatherings for discussions on controversial issues of the country with special focus on political moves taken by the incumbent.

2 postings of calls for public demonstrations against the ruling party's administration and handling of issues of national interest.

3 postings of full articles from the elite group and other sections of the society who express their disappointments in the country's politics on various issues.

4 posting of full texts and audio and video materials of various groups meetings, press releases and other material.

It could be worth mentioning here that among the issues raised as a way of mobilization includes calls for public uprising as it happened in the Arab world recently.

It should be noted that the trend in the websites to merely mobilize their audiences with issues they are in favor of, either for or against the political system in the nation, applies here too as it was the case in the above sections. It would be rarely or almost not at all that one can find a balance on the views that gets coverage in each of the websites.

They always have a wide coverage of opposition rallies organized by various groups and they do also post invitations indicating venue and time of such events. On the other camp postings of various nature in reaction to the opposition camp and in support of the status quo are taking significant portion of their websites, according to the findings of this research. What this mobilizing factor does not apply is for websites that are extensions of the domestic press. It tends to be the political environment these press products are working in might have an influence on the different nature of these websites. But this research doesn't confirm it as a main reason since the scope of this research does not cover it.

Samples of mobilizing postings are indexed in this paper as a case show taken from the websites which are subjects of this study.

Involving the Public

One of the greatest opportunities the cyberspace is opening to Ethiopian community abroad and living in the country is to actively participate in their country's affair which was not the case for many years in the past. The nature of the traditional press does not seem to have such an interactive environment between the press products and the public in general and audience of the media outlets in particular, as it is the case in the online media. Ethiopian online journalism, according to this research finding, has been exploiting this opportunity extensively. Among the subjects of this research paper almost all of the websites are have created various opportunities for the active participation the public in the affairs of its nation. It was also learnt that comparatively speaking it is mainly political issues that are mostly entertained for such purposes. The major ways that are involving the public by creating and widening the political spheres, if you like, of the nation that these media outlets are using are as follows;

1 Email exchange system between the readers and the journalists or staffs of the websites. This feature has been found in almost all the subjects of this study. The readers are invited to email their questions, comments, suggestions and/or any other views they might have to the given addresses. This communication can be taken as one way of involving the public in to the daily practices of journalism and in a way encouraging readers to participate in their country's affairs though it might lack some features which could make the public to even more actively participate and widen spheres of participation.

2 Publishing articles in full text from audiences. This has been found the widely used feature in again all the websites under investigation. It can be taken to the extent that the survival of these websites in terms of publishing new articles getting the necessary amount of stories to fill their homepages so that their websites will survive and not be boring ,it seems they are to a certain extent dependent on these articles. It is difficult to locate which group of the society these article writers are from because there are significant number of them who does not use their real names and profiles. But it was learnt that there are these group of elites who most of them reside in the western world who are actively and permanently participating in sending articles. Some are publishing their articles on various websites using their real names and profile and others just do not. The significant contribution this service is giving to the country that has not yet have a developed democracy is no doubt widening the sphere and allowing for various views to come out so that readers in particular and the society in general would know and benefit from them. Of course there seems to be a long way to go for each of the media outlets in this sector in terms of making sure diversified views are also getting covered so that the public would have a fair access to know all of them. On the other hand what is already available in these websites at the point of discussion now seems to also be significantly contributing to bring issues of various perspectives to audiences which otherwise could have been impossible in the existing press condition in the realm.

3 One of the features the online journalism has introduced to traditional journalism long time experience is the active participation of readers on the contents of news and other stories. Ethiopian journalism is also in this arena. It seems that the widely criticized limited public participation in the country's affairs has been compensated by this and the like opportunities the digital era brought with it. According to this research near 80 % of the subjects of this study have been providing their audiences with chances of participating in the contents of their publications. One of the ways this group of websites is using to involve their audiences is to leave spaces beneath every news story so that readers will write their comments, questions, new information on the issues they might have, etc...after reading the story. In addition there are also opportunities provided by the webs for readers to share contents with any one they want them to share to. Least but not last social networks like the face book and twitter have also been used by the websites to expand their reach to the masses to communicate with their audiences on individual bases. In summary it can be said that spaces for comments, sharing of contents and

reaching out and communicating with individuals on social networks are features that are being used by the Ethiopian online journalism as a way of involving the public into their products.

These features have given an opportunity for the general public to express their concerns and reactions on issues that are making the headlines. In addition this spaces can also be used for reaction related or sometimes not related matters which the readers are concerned about. These opportunities will no doubt contribute to develop the culture of public participation in their country's affairs and will significantly contribute to the advancement of freedom of expression and the press.

Key Feature of Ethiopian Online Journalism

This sections tries to see key features of the Ethiopian online journalism practices in the context of Jo Bardoel & Mark Deuze's (2001, 4) four key characteristics of online journalism; interactivity, customization of contents, multimediality and hypertextuality.

The findings of this research indicated that all the key features mentioned above describe Ethiopian online journalism too. Almost all the websites are using various mechanisms to make their services interactive and give spaces for audience to interact with their products and their staffs. Email exchanges, allocation of spaces for audiences to react on news and other formats of stories published, making use of the social networks like face book and twitter to interact with audiences are all manifestations that are being used by the online news websites.

Customization of contents in its form of providing archives for the websites' already published products and creating services that allow readers to have his or her own homepage at the search-or news site have also been used as one of the features of online journalism.

Multimediality does also describe Ethiopian online Journalism. The results indicated that multimediality in the context of providing audiences with text, audio and video versions of news stories have been applied in the Ethiopian online journalism. It is in all the websites investigated that this features happen to be implemented. Though there is a big problem in making their own original stories for the various versions of the stories they have been using the feature using other sources productions which overlap with the other characteristics of online journalism, hypertextuality.

Hypertextuality can be said the widely used feature of online journalism by Ethiopian news websites. Almost all the websites have been extensively using this feature in a significant portion of their daily coverage. It was observed by this research that hypertextuality defines the Ethiopian online journalism in a greater extent than any other features. The reason behind turns out to be lack of original sources seemingly arising from lack of human resources and financial constraints But this paper has not done any investigation to find the real causes behind and does not confirm it as the real cause for the dominance of hypertextuality in these websites. What it can confirm is that this feature describes Ethiopian online journalism practices.

Challenges of the online media

The challenges of Ethiopia online journalism could be seen from the following angles

1 audience reach

2 source of information

3 ethical practices

One of the targets of any mass media institution is to try and reach as many audiences as possible depending of its predetermined targets of audiences. There can be various reasons for determining target audiences. It depends on the purpose and objectives of the person and /or the institutions practicing journalism. Almost all of the research subjects of this research project claim to serve the general Public of Ethiopia in their introductory words about themselves stated in their webpage though it was learnt that there is lack of detailed explanations of the mission and purpose of their sites and editorial policies they are governed by in almost all of the sites. However it is possible to deduct from their brief statements about themselves that they are aiming at trying to reach as many audiences as possible from the general public. One of the serious challenges the Ethiopian online media has been going through is reaching the masses in Ethiopia.

Though these websites are serving as discussed above as a means of broader opportunities in widening access for freedom of the press and outlets for various view and perspectives on the country's affairs, their challenge remain to be reaching the masses living in Ethiopia. One of the challenges arises from the country's political environment. Some 20% of the sites which are subjects of this study are suffering from banning of their websites in the country's internet services. Cases in point for this allegation are Ethiomedia and Ethiopianreview web pages. However these sites managed to reach the Diaspora community living in the west, mainly US and Europe. But since the purpose is to serve the majority of Ethiopians the challenge remains to be influential. In what seems to be an effort to mitigate the impact of the banning, this paper has identified in its content review of the domestic press that there are times where issues from the online media got coverage in the domestic press which in relative terms have a better access in reaching the masses in the country. In addition these websites are making use of links with social networks like the face book and twitter to further strengthen their reach to the masses in transferring their contents and seeking the public's reactions. Ethiopia. These networks are greatly impacting their efforts to catch as many audiences as they could catch.

The second challenge is in finding sources of information on what is going on in the country for their news stories and articles on their selected topics. This has challenge has got various manifestations. One of it could be the observable lack of original stories mad by the Ethiopian online news websites. The pages in their sites more often are full of stories that are already done by other media outlets or any other source they decided to make use of. Ethiopian online media seem to be dependent in its sources of stories and other contents on other local and international

media outlets and individuals who send articles on various issues. Since these websites are based outside of the country and their relationship with the government is strained, except those who are labeled as pro government news sites, getting original sources especially from government structures is almost none in this sites coverage. Rather they mainly focus on either anonymous sources or other media outlets which might threaten their credibility to a greater extent. On the other hand the rest of the websites labeled as pro government and/or less harmful as some call them, in the eyes of the government, do have a relatively much better access to original sources and they are able to cover original stories made by their own journalists. As it is discussed in the previous sections of this paper the political environment causing problems on critical private press products can be extended to the online journalism sector and manifested itself among others in lack of original sources especially from government institutions.

The third challenge is ethicality which is the major focus of this paper and discussed from the perspectives of the journalists in a more detail in the other chapters of this paper.. According to content analyses mainly meant for figuring out how much of the type of contents Ethiopian online journalism is entertaining in its websites, it was learnt that the online media is full of views either for or against the government. Literally speaking there was no online website among the subjects of this study that is entertaining a balanced view of issues from every side of the camp. They are full of either for or against the government activities. Starting from the choices of topic of stories to the way stories are headlined and angles from which stories are related to and to the amount of space given to details of contents, according to this papers investigation, a total and extreme bias is dominating the Ethiopian online news media. And this needs to be considered as a major challenge for the professional practice of journalism in the nation.

Conclusion

The Major objective of this chapter was to assess the extent to which the digital era in its form of online journalism is impacting freedom of expression in general and the press in particular in political regimes that are believed to be oppressive of press freedom by taking Ethiopia as a case in point. I would like to borrow the following assertion from Jo Bardoel and Mark Deuze (2001) quoting several scholars to frame this papers conclusion.

‘The impact of the Internet and other new information- and communication technologies on the profession of journalism should not be underestimated. The Internet is changing the profession of journalism in at least three ways: it has the potential to make the journalist as an intermediary force in democracy superfluous (Bardoel, 1996); it offers the media professional a vast array of resources and sheer endless technological possibilities to work with (Quinn, 1998; Pavlik, 1999); and it creates its own type of journalism on the Net: so-called digital or rather: online journalism(Singer, 1998; Deuze, 1999)’.

(Bardoel, J and Deuze, M, 2001)

This chapter's findings, if you like, could be served as an empirical evidence for the above statement though it was not meant for proving it. The findings of this paper would share all the three factors stated by the authors as to be the case In Ethiopian online journalism too. And such an opportunity from the digital era is found out to be greatly influencing freedom of expression and the press in countries' with political regimes oppressive of such rights, as the showcase for the investigation was Ethiopia.

Political regimes that can be described by features of Authoritarian theory of the press use every possible instrument at hand to suppress freedom of expression and the press with main objective of avoiding voices against them. Put it simply, if such regimes find it a threat to their power monopoly they are determined to avoid it from the scene. In this regard according to the case study of this research the digital era comes out to be a liberator. The era is giving a real hard time for the oppressive regimes to make sure the voices they do not want to be heard remains unheard.

The chapter focused on the relationship between specifically press freedom environment in the nation and the online press. Based on this paper's findings and analyses, it could be concluded that the internet has been extensively used as a liberator of press freedom suppressions in the nation.

Online Journalism has been serving the nation as major outlets for views and perspectives on affairs of the country which otherwise could have been rarely covered in the domestic press. These issues are addressed in various formats from news stories on the matters to news features and articles of views and opinions of various sections of the society. These medium is being used as a tool to mobilize the general public mainly on political matters of the nation ranging from rallies and demonstrations for or against the government to creating awareness on issues they want Ethiopians should or should not participate.

Involving the public and serving as an outlet for various sections of the society to send and receive information and ideas of all kind by giving full text, audio and video coverage have also been another unique opportunity created by the online journalism practices in the nation. These accesses are enabling the public to actively participate in their own affairs which many are denied of it in their own nation. Today one can easily witness the abundance of active participation of Ethiopians who are not journalists in the online media as a clear indication of exercising freedom of the press and expression which observably is difficult to have it domestically.

Seen from the perspectives of the key features of online journalism as listed by Jo Bardoel & Mark Deuze (2001) it could be concluded that all the four features mentioned have been exhibited by Ethiopian online journalism, interactivity, customization of contents, multimediality and hypertextuality describes Ethiopian online journalism, according to the findings of this research. Though each of the features have not been used to equal extent ,each one of this features have been located in all the websites chosen to be subjects of this study.

But all these developments do not come without challenges. The online journalism is facing a number of challenges to this date. One of the main challenges is accessibility of the online products to the general public. The development of internet technology, its affordability and the big number of illiterate people in the nation is causing a natural challenge on its accessibility by many Ethiopians. This seems to be a question of time and possible to be resolved given that there is a fast growing development of expanding the technology and minimizing costs of accesses. What could be a serious challenge is the continuing controversy on the banning of internet sites which the government is blamed for fearing of threats to its power from the contents of some websites. This research used to gather data from various sources in the effort to have empirical evidence on the controversies and learnt that the problem exists. Therefore this trend is challenging the online journalism to be able to reach as many audiences as it could in the country. The audiences that are managed to be easily addressed to this date are the Diasporas who in fact have a better access and ability to use the internet.

The other major challenge faced by Ethiopian online journalism practices has got to do with ethics. This paper is aiming at addressing the issue of ethics both in the online media and in the domestic private press from the perspective of the journalists themselves taking into consideration the political environment revealed in this chapter. But as it was observed from the data gathered for the purpose of the major questions under discussion that the question of ethics is causing a serious challenge for Ethiopian online journalism. Topics selected for full article coverage from the audiences and/or news stories topics and the angles from which stories are related are found out to be in extreme positions either for or against the political systems in the nation depending on the websites choice of sides. This trend has created an environment that it would seem difficult to find an independent press in the online industry that could professionally serve the public by basing its work in appropriate ethical norms and standards. The rest of the chapters discussed the issue with regard to ethics in a more detail.

Chapter Five

Ethics and the Ethiopian Journalists

Findings and Analyses

Results from the Survey

Introduction

In this section what is going to be presented is the results of the survey research. This survey was conducted by distributing to almost all the journalists working for the domestic news based private products and the online news based websites. This survey is meant for gathering supportive data for the mainly qualitative based investigation of journalism ethics in Ethiopia. In this survey efforts were made to collect the views and interpretations of Ethiopian Journalists who work either in the traditional domestic press or in the online web. In the first section of the survey it was news approaches and some ethical values which have universal acceptance were assessed with their place and interpretation among Ethiopian Journalists minds. In the second and third sections the instruments that could probably used to give effect to ethical journalism and the independence level of the same journalists have been investigated. How they evaluate their category of the press, private press, in their own eyes in its performance in relation to ethical values and standards have also been treated in this survey. In addition factors that the journalists believe in influencing them to develop their behavior in identifying the good from the bad have also been assessed.

You would find further on the issues on the results discussion and interpretations chapter. This chapter is mainly presenting the survey results which are meant to substantiating the main qualitative investigation of this research project. Otherwise the survey is not conducted as a major tool of investigation. Therefore much of the results are simply presentation of general statistical findings mainly on frequencies.

News Approaches and Universal Journalism Values

In this section Findings from the interview and the survey will be presented and analyzed simultaneously. The focus of the section will be to figure out how values and principles of journalism which have a wider application in the world, more often considered as universal values of ethical journalism practices are perceived and interpreted by Ethiopian Journalists. The results from this assessment would be used to locate their own values and principles from the context of their perceptions and interpretations of universal values. In addition the approach they are using with regard to ethical values and principles of journalism in their selection and treatment of news stories coverage will be also addresses in this section. The contexts through which the approaches will be analyzed are the deontological and teleological approaches of journalism ethics. The values that are chosen to represent universal values include; dedication to truth, fairness, independence, respecting rights of others, public access to media. These ideals of

journalism are found in various codes of conducts around the world which in effect put them in the category of universal values of journalism ethics. In this chapter the results from the data gathered through the interview and the survey will be presented. The analyses and the discussion of the results in the following chapters will be done on the bases of journalism ethics theories in order to categorize conceptions of journalism ethics by journalists' on universal basses. The journalism ethics theories that are used to categorize Journalists' views and interpretations are:

1 Deontological ethics theory

2 Teological/consequestialist ethics theory

3 Virtue ethics theory and

4 Afriethics theory

The discussion on each of the above mentioned theories was done in chapter two.

This chart shows a summary of Ethiopian journalists' views and perceptions of values of their profession and approaches of production in their daily works. The results are elaborated in each of the sections below the table.

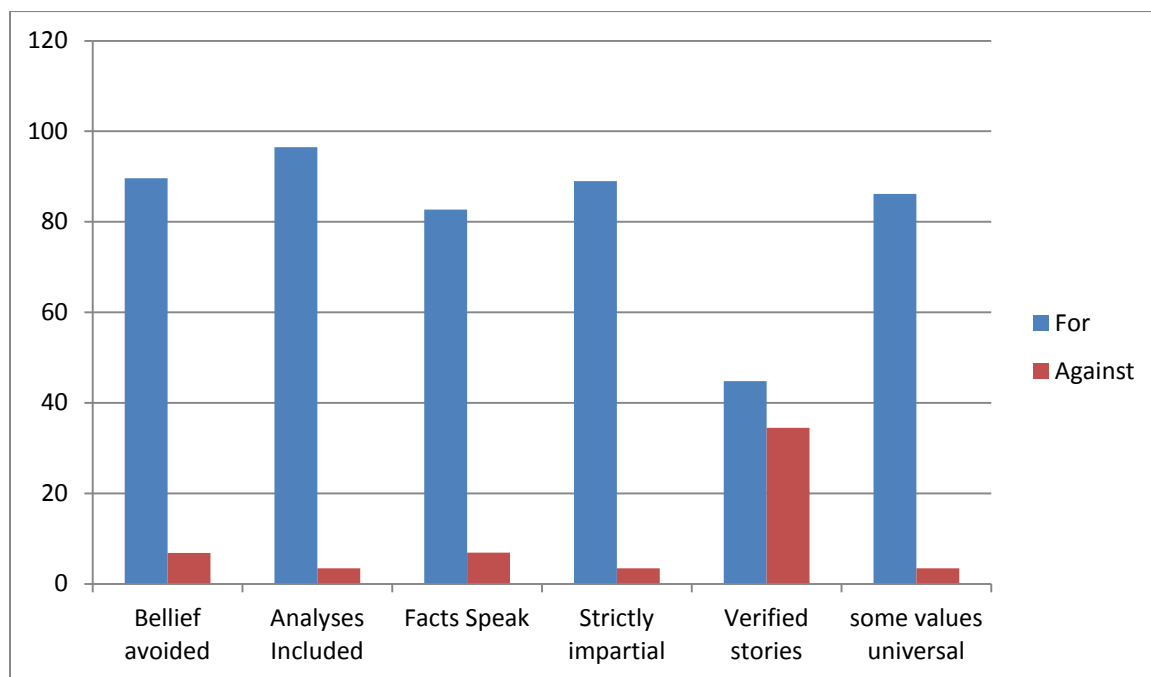


Figure 1

Seeking the Truth

One of the values attached to seeking the truth is journalism practices with a universally applicable nature is taking care not to misrepresent facts or contexts. As it is shown in the above graph, close to 90 percent of the journalists do take it as their important value of journalism. This result has been the same for both the Diaspora and the domestic Ethiopian journalists. In other words those who are working on the web, mostly the Diaspora journalists and those working for the traditional press, mainly the domestic journalists, equally share the significant importance of this value. It should be noted though that even more percentage of the respondents attach the importance of incorporating analyses in their products within the context of seeking the truth. As it is indicated in the summary graph above more than 90 percent of them do believe in it. And as the age of the journalists and their working experiences increased their approval rate for the significance of incorporating analyses into their stories do also increase. According to the survey analyses made, there is a significant correlation between the age of the journalists and the belief to incorporate analyses into stories. The correlation significance measurement showed it to be sig(2 tailed) is 0.018 where correlation is significant at 0.05 level. And again this figure is quite the same for both categories, the Diaspora and domestic press. This belief has been further strengthened by their perception of facts. Again equal numbers of journalists take the attitude that facts speak for themselves. As it was elaborated in the interviews response, analyses is important not because facts for themselves are not enough but in order to give deeper insights for the readers.

Seeking truth can also be manifested in testing accuracy of stories from various sources. Here the results indicated a little less agreement. As it can be clearly seen in the above table verification of stories has been given significant importance by close to 50 percent of the journalists while around 35 percent disagree. There is a similar figure for again both the domestic and the Diaspora press or the web based journalists. As it was learnt from the explanation gathered from the face to face interview with the journalists chosen for the interview the less importance attached among those journalists comes from the focus given to verification of stories from a given source of reliable information could be enough to cover a story in making it fact. The journalists attached problem of access to sources of information in the country to develop the idea of less focus on verification of stories from all sources. Here it should be noted that also there was a significant relationship between the belief in verified stories and education level of the journalists. As it was found out from the survey the more the educational level goes higher the stronger the belief on the reliance of verified stories would be. The statistical analyses on the bases of Pearson correlation coefficient, the correlation significance between the two variables at sig (2tailed) is 0.002 at 0.01 significance level

Avoidance of undercover methods of news covering has also been investigated as part of the value in seeking truth. Almost all do agree that it should be avoided. In a detail investigation of the matter they were asked to indicate their level of agreement for cases where traditional means of news gathering could not help. One of the cases was to what extent they consider to pretend

not to be a journalist in cases where they need to get crucial information for the story they selected to be worth reporting. Fifty five percent of them said they never pretend while forty percent do. In the case of paying sources for crucial info the majority disagree(60percent) while even less number of them agree (20 percent).What is even more interesting is the disagreement they showed for avoiding undercover methods of news gathering when traditional means of gathering information fail to work. More than half of them chose to stick to only the traditional means even when it is not working though there are some 41 percent who consider to use undercover means as long as they found the information is crucial to serve the interest of the public. As it is further explained in the interview the commitment to avoiding undercover stories arise from the fear not to expose the profession to wrong culture of deceiving. Giving equal opportunity to respond to allegation could also be taken as a manifestation of seeking Truth. In this regard there is a unanimous agreement of its relevance for the profession More than 90 percent from both the domestic and the Diaspora journalists attach a very significant importance with this value. The interviews results have also shown the same results and explaining it to be one of the core values that should be respected all along in the profession.

News Approaches

One of the questions put forward for journalists to assess their approaches to new coverage is the way they treat news stories that could potentially harm others in reference to the benefit the given story could bring with it. The table below is a summary of the survey results concerning ethical approaches of news stories by the Journalists.

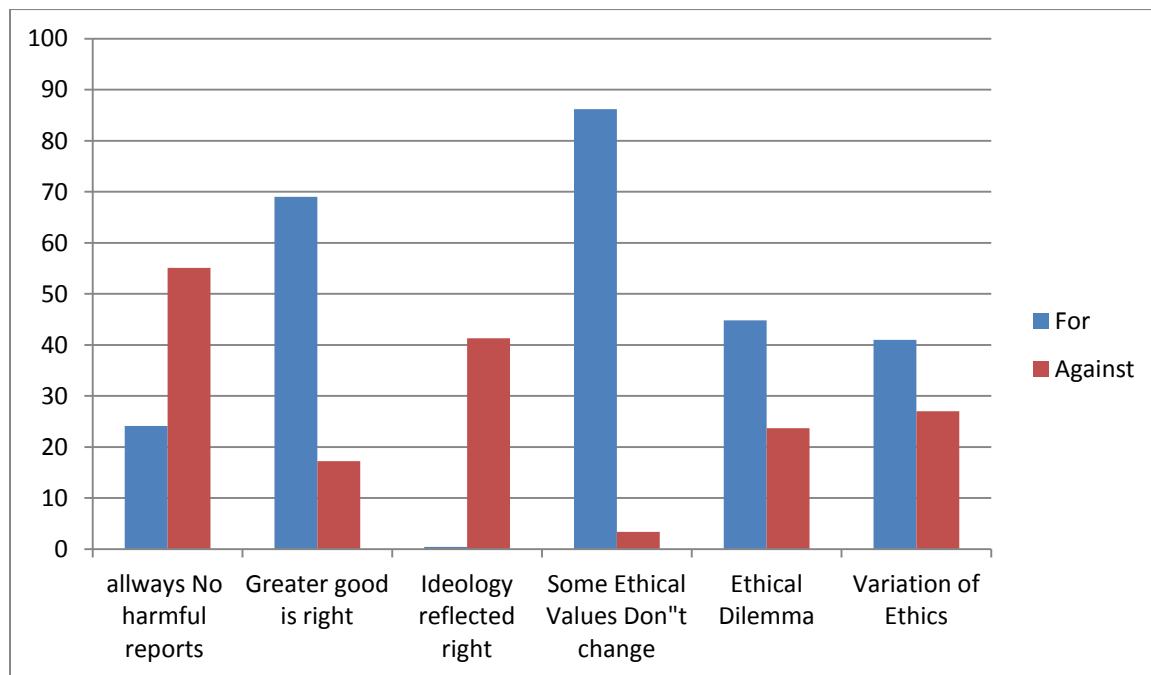


Figure 2

The above graph shows journalists views on values of journalism ethics which in effect leads to understand the possible news approaches the journalists are following. These approaches are taken from the dominant journalism ethics theories that are more often used as explanation of the normative approaches for the better ethical practices of Journalism. These normative ethical theories would help categorize the conception of journalism ethics by Ethiopian journalists so that it would be possible to understand and draw a clearer picture of the trend of journalism ethics in the country and how it is perceived among journalists and what theoretical explanation would give it a better direction.

One of the questions used to figure out their news approaches with regard to ethical decisions was to assess the extent to which they would agree that covering stories that could potentially harm others is always wrong at any condition even when the story is found out to be with benefits for the cause they are standing. It could be public interest and/or their individual or organizational interest. The most important point that was planned to figure out here is whether there are rooms that entertain consequences of their products in times of decisions either to cover or reject a story. As it is seen in the first column of the graph above the significant majority of the journalists won't agree with the idea that covering harmful stories for others is always wrong. This group believes that there are cases where harmful stories are justifiable. A slightly greater than 20 percent of them though would consider avoiding harmful stories even when the stories benefits outshine the harm. What could be more interesting here is that journalists' educational background has an impact on the attitude they hold towards the mentioned feature. As the educational level of the journalists' go higher, the same is true with their disagreement level to avoid harmful reports at any cost. The statistical measurement of correlation indicated that the correlation between the education level and the approval rate of avoiding harmful at any cost has a sig(2tailed) of 0.03 at a correlation significance of 0.05.

On the other hand those journalists who disagree with the avoidance of harmful reports at any condition would accept the complex nature of ethical dilemmas in news coverage and be part of the idea that journalists should allow to develop individual codes of conduct. In other words they recognize ethical dilemmas in news coverage to be often so complex that journalists should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes of conduct.

Even more number of journalists do agree with the idea that tries to investigate and in the mean time to cross check their responses consistency in a different approach of questioning more or less the same idea. As it is indicated in the second row of the graph above journalists were asked to rate their level of agreement with the possible justification of harmful stories when they are found to be serving the interest of the majority of the public. Statistically here it was even clearly seen that there are certain group of journalists who have shown their agreement with the same idea but presented in a slightly different form. But in terms of consistency, the significant majority is still holding the view that prioritizing the benefits that could be gained as a result of their products instead of the harm it might cause on others.

On the other hand a huge number of journalists (86 percent) believe that there are ethical values and principles like telling no lies and others which should never be violated under any condition. This should be seen in the context of their belief that what is ethical in journalism varies from one situation to another. According to the correlation measurement taken to its whether there exists a significant relationship with the two views it was found out there exists a significant relationship that measures sig(2tailed) 0.000 at 0.01 significant level. In addition the view has been found out to be more acceptable when experience of the journalists grow. Perhaps their views on strict rules for ethics may not arise from the analogy that argues to take it as the perfect and comprehensive tool to give effect to better ethical practices. Rather it seems from their perception of the idea to be one of the best ways of achieving a better ethical journalism in a country. In addition the same groups of journalists do also recognize the importance of understanding the complex nature of ethical dilemma cases and allowing the establishment of codes of conducts at an individual level if need be. The correlation of the two perspectives has been registered to be sig (2tailed) 0.003 at 0.01 significance level. This can be seen from the survey results to where, as it is seen in the above graph, those who believe in the complex nature of ethical dilemma cases and the need to be allowed to establish individual based rules of conduct exceeds by far from those who do not accept the idea.

What is found out to be with a very a low agreement to be taken as the right approach of journalism practices is on whether it is a good thing if media organizations have decidedly ideological points of view in their coverage of the news. Literally there is no journalist who thinks that is right. But there are this 37 percent of them who found it to locate their stands on this.

The other concept which is used to measure news approaches was a question related to news decisions in the context of utility. In other words the journalists perception were assessed in what they more often might do when they are faced with stories with a potential to benefit the majority but still could harm certain group or individuals. More than 2/3 of the journalists take the sides to prioritize the majority while the rest stood against it. This belief appears to be the same for all demographic variables except that there is a significant correlation with those who favors strict rules, recognize the various and complex nature of ethical instances and accepts ideological stands of a media organization to be reflected in news stories. Those who belong to one of these views do also approve prioritizing the majority's benefit as their news approaches. However the concept of taking as a good thing if media organizations have decidedly ideological points of view in their coverage of the news did appear to fail to win the majority. It was accepted by 44.8 percent and rejected by nearly close percentage with those accepted (41.3 percent)

Act Independently

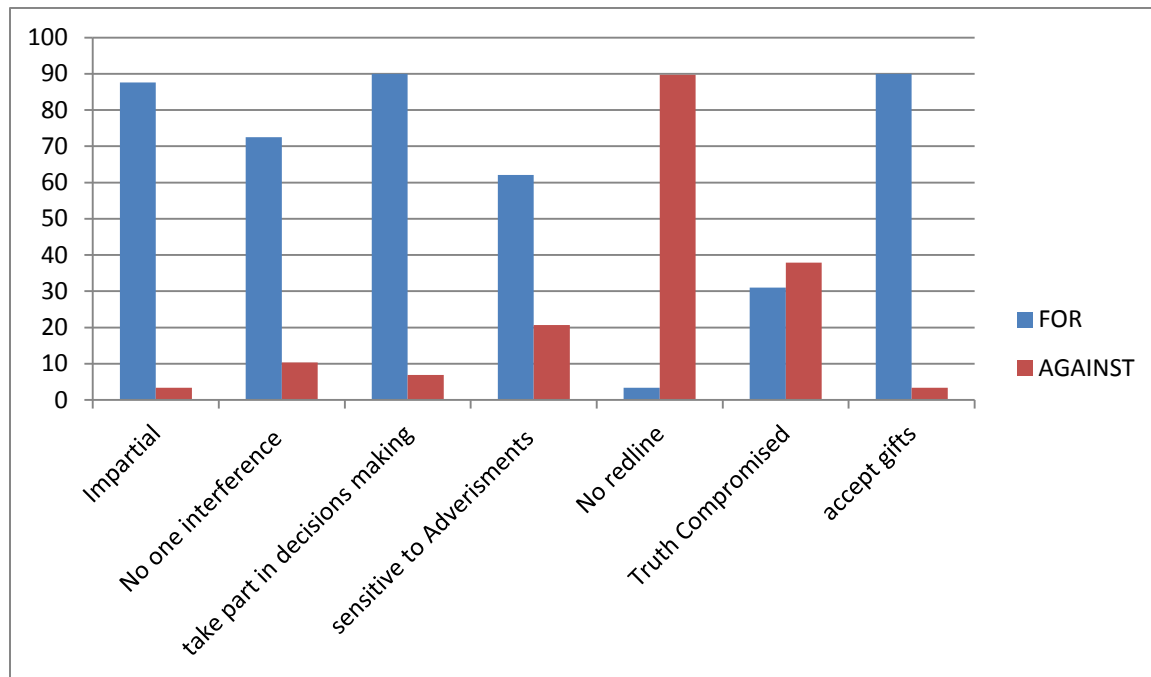


Figure 3

Impartiality is one of the values that have been used by various codes of ethical conducts as a way of defining independence. Journalists are supposed to avoid favored treatments of any individual or group interests. Ethiopian journalists do also literally speaking have a consensus on the significance of staying away from being partial in their profession. As it is indicated in the above chart except very few portion of them (3.4%) the rest expressed their strong belief in being impartial. The important relationship one can draw from this survey result is that those journalists who have a red line in terms of giving their integrity for unethical practices of journalism do also stress the significance of impartiality in their profession. There was a registered significant relationship measured between the two groups.(sig(2tailed) is 0.000 at 0.01 significance level)

Interference from within inside the organizations they are working for have also been assessed. The result shows that more than 2/3 of them do not experience interferences either from their immediate bosses or owners of the company in such a way that they would be forced to practice journalism against their will and the ethical cannons of journalism. Besides, the same percentage of the journalists expressed that they take part in every decision made to the fate of their stories to report, discard and/or modify and make use of it again. However many (62.1%) have expressed their agreements with their organization sensitivity about offending officials, advertisers and readers. What is even more interesting is that those who claimed to have involved

in the decision making processes of their story have correlated with those who accepted their organizations sensitivity about offending officials. This perhaps comes from their observation and experience in involving the discussions over the decisions to be made with regard to their stories. However they said they never allow crossing their integrity boundaries in terms of being ordered to what is unethical through fear of job loss and similar black mailing strategies. Close to 90 % (89.7%) do strongly disagree to tolerate their bosses decisions to force them do a story that they think is unethical when they do not even get a better place to work. In other words they believe that just for the fear of not to lose a job they would never compromise their integrity for their profession. They would take this commitment of respecting their professional values nearly one third of them do not agree at all to compromise truth even in times of war where their patriotic intervention might be needed. However there are about again one third of them who do agree with the idea of compromising the truth where their patriotic intervention is needed to protect their country in times of war.

Another indicator of independence which is refusing gifts, favors, political involvement etc...,when they might compromise journalistic integrity have not seen a significant disagreement. Literally there was no disagreement on the importance of applying this value in their career.

Instruments to check on Ethics

This section presents the results obtained from the survey on the journalists' experience of using tools or instruments that could assist them in taking the right decision to be ethical. This assessment was done after almost all did express their care for ethical journalism to be an important element of the profession. Their stands on the relevance of ethics were measured in the assumption that there could be a total rejection of relevance of ethics for the media. For the simple 'yes' and 'no' option of response question they were asked, 96.6 % expressed their strong agreements.

The following diagram shows the journalists response for each of the instruments that could potentially be used to assist ethical practices of the profession.

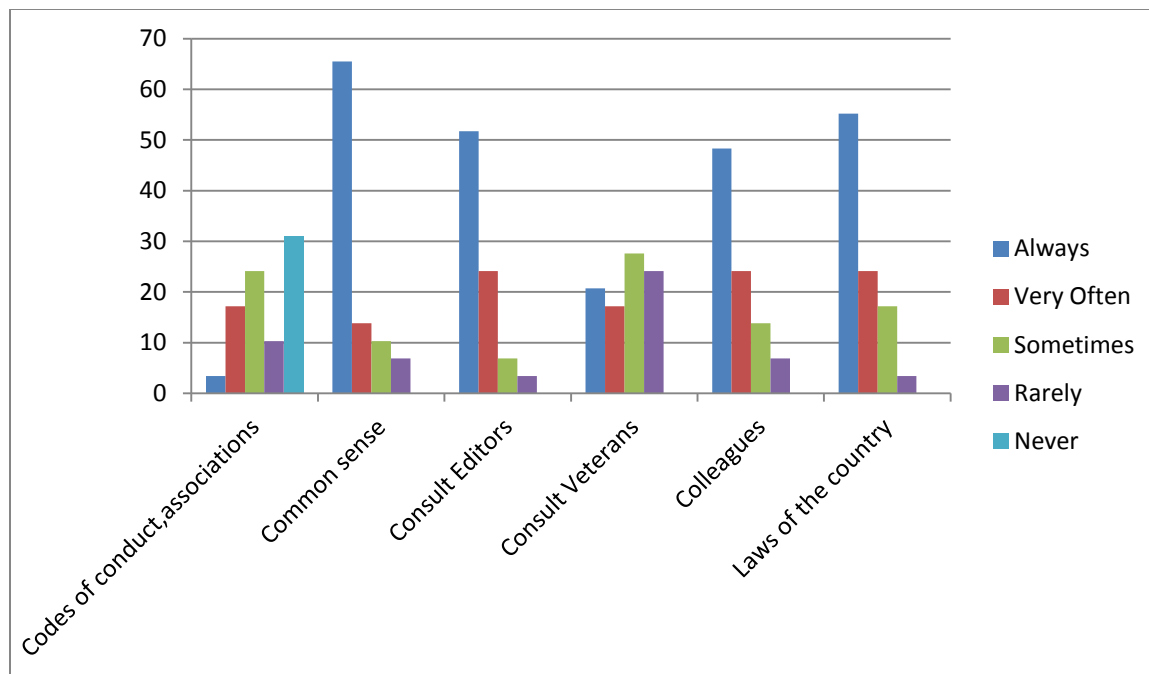


Figure 4

As it can be easily learnt from the above chart the leading instrument that is being used by journalists to assist their decision would be common sense (65%). What is more interesting is the more experience the journalists have the more they will be using common sense. According to the correlation scale, experience and common sense have got modestly significant correlation and the sig (2tailed) is 0.032 at 0.01 significant levels. The next useful instrument following their common sense is laws of the country (55.2%). The position of the journalists would also have its role in using the two mentioned instruments. Editors and those working at a higher decision making level consult the country laws more than the rest of the journalists do, according to the findings of this survey. This perhaps could emanate from the nature of their responsibility and accountability of the entire product of their journalism productions. It is not only the country laws that the highest positioned journalists consults more than the rest of the journalists do but also with consulting veterans too. It could be again their responsibility which encourages them to seek perspectives and views on ethical matters from various groups.

When it comes to the least used instrument from the six indicators it turned out to be codes of conducts of their own institutions for those who have one and journalists associations' codes of conducts for those who don't have their own. The general assessment of the findings from the survey indicated that there is a very low use of codes of conducts across the board. That is to say whether experienced or less experienced, young or old, male or female all the journalists tend to ignore use of codes of conducts. This perhaps emanates from lack of journalists unions with a legitimate ground from the journalists' consensus. In addition many of the press institutions have not yet developed their own codes of conducts, both abroad and in the domestic press. It was only in this category that 31% of the respondents indicated they have never used it. What is more

interesting is that the rest of the factors except usage of code of conducts have been consulted at least to a rarely level. There is no other instrument in the list above which have been considered by a single journalists never been consulted. And yet 31% said they never used codes of conducts either from their associations and/or their organizations. The leading for the rarely consulted instrument would be Veterans. Veterans have been the most rarely consulted from the group. Consulting editor and searching ideas from other colleagues have been nearly equally used instruments.

Self Evaluation

In this section results from the self assessment of the private traditional press and the online web journalism on their performance of ethical practices are presented. The assessment was by the journalists themselves. All the subjects of this study were asked to evaluate the private press of not only their own but also others and give their general impression about it. The general impression was sought in order to avoid possible discomfort that could be created among the respondents to passing judgments on other's outputs by mentioning specific names. The results summary as it was the case with other categories presented here in the graph below.

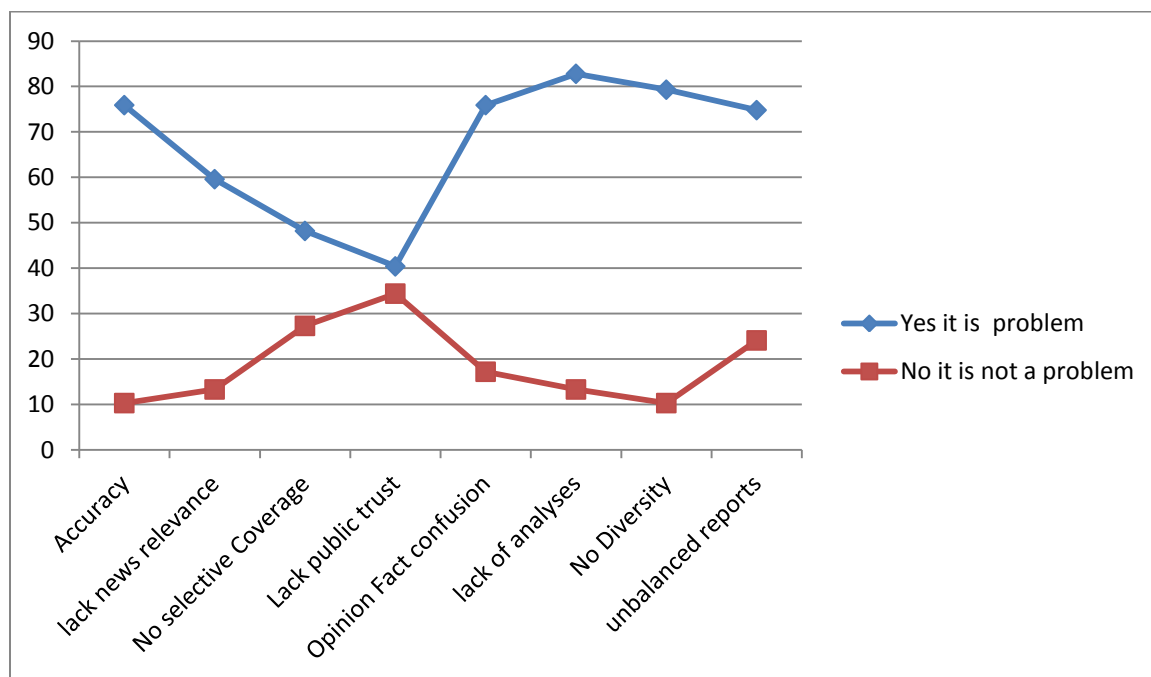


Figure 5

The journalists' assessment of the private press in Ethiopia and the online press abroad could be said to be very critical of their own professional performance. Almost all the demographic categories like gender, educational status, work experience, position and others would not seem to influence that much the journalists' assessment. It could be said that there is a consensus among the journalists on the various faceted problems of the private press. According to the survey findings of this research the Ethiopian Journalism is believed to be suffering from

accuracy (75.9%), Opinion and fact confusion (75.9%), lack of analyses (82.8%), diversity problems (79.3%) and unbalanced reports (74.8). Each of these values, almost all of them are manifestations of weak ethical performance, has been rated as to be problems of the Ethiopian Journalism practices by its own performers. Accuracy, lack of balance and confusion between facts and opinions as an indicator of seeking truth and lack of analyses and diversity together with unbalanced reports would contribute to less independence in failing to provide with a complete picture would all be concerns of ethical Journalism. Content reviews made to supplement the analyses phase did also confirm the rampant practice of unethical journalism.

Public trust has also been mentioned as a problem by at least a little more than one third of the journalists though still the other one third disagrees. Relatively speaking it is the problem with lack of public trust which managed to have large portion of the journalists to argue against its existence than it was the case with other problems that were used by the journalists to describe professional performances of their own media category, the private press in and outside of the country.

There are also findings of this survey which indicated a modest relationship with some of the features used to describe problems of journalism in the country. Those who took confusion of opinion with facts as problem of the private media tend to also think the same with lack of investigative stories, balanced reports and lack of accuracy to be the case in Ethiopian Journalism. This could perhaps show the values these group of journalists attached to their profession to be the right way of doing it. On the other hand those who believe lack of investigative stories to describe the problem tend to also believe the public has no trust on the journalists and stories lack analyses and depth.

Influential Factors on behavior

The graph below indicates the summary of the value attached to the level influence each one of the listed factors have on journalists general perception and understanding of moral behaviors which in effect is influencing them in their day to day consideration of ethics in their profession though may not directly influence them. Those factors which could have a direct impact on the daily journalism practices with regard to ethical considerations have been investigated and the results are presented in Figure 8.

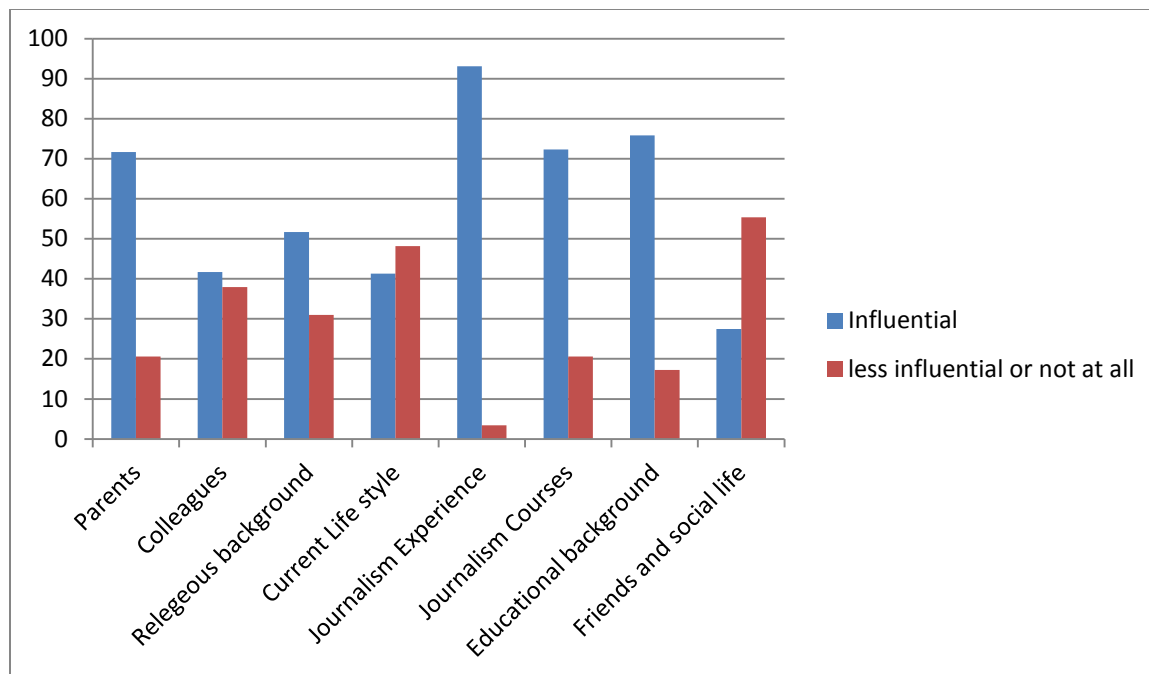


Figure 6

The top rated factors influencing journalists' behaviors in Ethiopia are Educational background, Parents, Journalism experience and Journalism courses. Each one of the factors have been accepted as influential by more than 2/3 of the journalists participated in this survey. On the contrary friends and social life, current life style, colleagues and religious background are found out to be less influential, according to responses of journalists which could be seen in the above chart. Though these factors have been identified as the top three factors to be seen as less influential or not influential at all, it does not mean that they have never been taken as influential at all. For instance religious background was considered to be influential by slightly more than half of the total percentage of the respondents. In addition there are 41.3 and 41.7 percent of the respondents who take current family life and colleagues respectively to be influential. In another perspective we would find out that the least accepted factor in influencing behavior is friends and social life followed by current life style. On the other hand the most accepted one is Journalism experience followed by educational background. Again on another view it is factors which are related to actual journalism works which made it to the top rated factors to be influential in ethical behaviors. It is only parents who joined this top rated category with no direct link to actual journalism practices. In other words the findings show that it is internal factors which are more influential in ethical behaviors of journalists than external factors not directly related to journalism practices.

It could be also worth mentioning that some modest relationship observed among demographic data and factors influencing behavior. As it was seen from correlation analyses of the survey data, age has modest correlation with educational background and current lifestyle factors to be influencing behaviors. The older journalists do more often accept to be influenced by current

family life and educational background in their behavior practicing journalism than the younger ones. Though it should be noted that this correlation is modest ($r=.436, \text{sig}=0.018$ at 0.01 significant level)

Political Environment

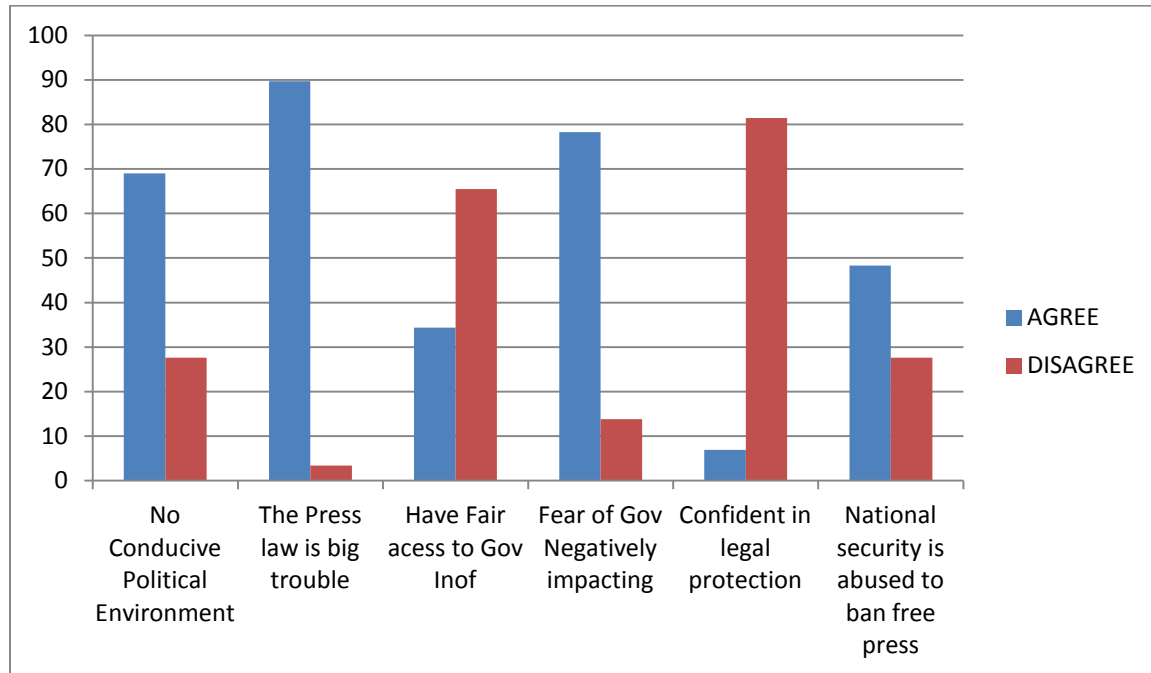


Figure 7

The above chart is a summary of journalists' reaction for the listed statements that are meant for assessing the political environment with regards to their professional activities. As can be inferred it is the country's press law, fear of getting punished by the government and lack of confidence in legal protection many journalists are complaining about. These issues have been concerns for more than 2/3 of them. Pertaining to the country's press law it is close to 90 percent of them who took it as a problem for their professional performance. (89.7%) It is a very little portion of them (3.4%) who disagrees with it. Besides for the nearly 80 percent of the journalists fear of government punishment is negatively impacting their profession and they expressed also their concern the situation could lead them to totally quit their job as it could be seen in the presentation of the interview results later in the section of interview findings in this chapter. This survey results section as it is explained in the introductory section of the chapter is mainly presenting the survey results which are meant to substantiating the main qualitative investigation of this research. Otherwise the survey is not conducted as a major tool of investigation. Therefore much of the results are simply presentation of general statistical findings mainly on frequencies. All in all close to 70 percent of them feel like there is no conducive political environment in their country to professionally practice journalism. In the next section you will be

able to find out the factors that have a direct impact on their profession as it is stated by the journalists themselves.

Factors with a Direct Impact on Ethical Journalism

The chart below shows a summary of the influential factors with a direct impact of the journalists' daily journalism practices specially in their consideration of ethical values. The subjects of this survey were requested to indicate which of the listed factors is either positively or negatively influencing or not influencing them when it comes to ethical practices of journalism. The rating categories were used in a five scale likert scale model but in the table below categories with 'very' and 'extremely' influential influences are combined and the rest of the categories from 'little' to 'no influence at all' summed up together. And finally it is only two categories that either show influential or not influential which are displayed in the chart below.

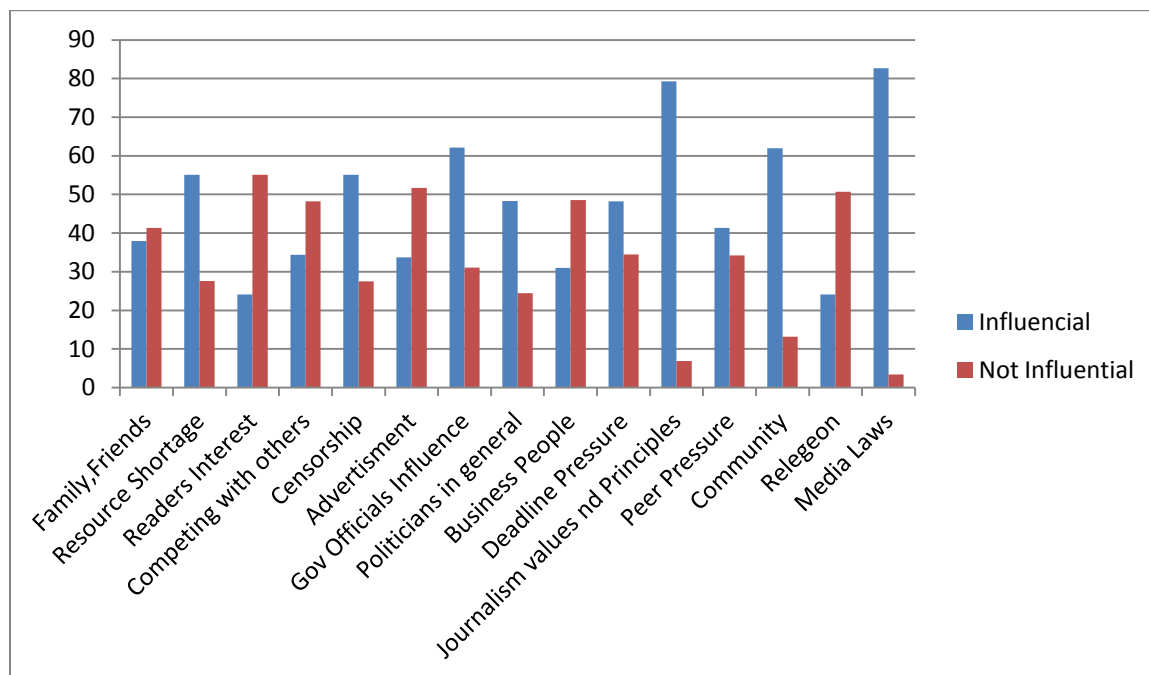


Figure 8

The top five factors with many of the journalists claimed to have been influenced by them are the country's media law, journalism values and principles, sensibilities of communities, government officials and shortage of resources. And the top five factors to be identified as the least influential in impacting ethical considerations are readers interest, advertisement, political or religious affiliation, business people and competing with other media outlets to exceed by reputation and by the number of audiences. It should be noted that the categories for the top and least supported are made in consideration of figures above and below 50 percent range. Otherwise there are still factors from the least supported categories which managed to have a

significant portion of journalists, above 1/3 of the total size, taking them as problems. Deadline pressure (48%), advertisements (33.7%), competing media outlets (34.4%), family and friends (37.9%) are cases in point.

On the other hand there was an observable correlation among almost each one of the factors. For instance those who considered families and friends to directly impact their works do also tend to believe in being influenced by readers' interest, political environment and advertisements. The correlation for this can be taken as relatively stronger in that the measurement shows where r is from .785 to .878 at a 0.01 significance level scale according to Pearson correlation coefficient. This did also work with those who mentioned resource shortages. These groups tend to also be impacted by competing media outlets, readers' interest and advertisements. This would show that the factors directly affecting their works are interrelated to each other.

Interview Findings

In this section finding from the in-depth interview held with senior editors of the private press in Ethiopia is presented and analyzed. The editors were chosen to be the perfect sources for deep insights into the understandings of journalism matters for their position in the profession expose them, almost daily, with ethical considerations. The major reason for it is that they are entitled to be the final person to decide on the output of their media outlets and bear the responsibility of the consequences than any other journalists in the hierarchy. It does not mean that the rest of the journalists do not have these issues in their hand at all. But relatively speaking, because they are the editors with a decision making responsibility they would be forced to give much emphases on the matter. In addition to that since it is not possible to have interviews with all the journalists the researcher decided to have the focus on the editors. In this section it is not only results from the interview conducted by the researcher himself which is going to be presented. It did also include views and perspectives of other editors who have not been interviewed by the journalist for this research purposes. Interviews given for other purposes with a highly related topic of discussion with the major objective of this research have also been incorporated. Below is the list of the editors interviewed by the researcher and lists of editors whose interview collected from other sources. The interviews from other sources have selected not only by the direct relationship of the topics they are talking about with the major objective of this research but also by their time of interview to have the latest view possible. It should be noted that because of the political environment they are claiming to exist in the country except two of them the rest interviewed by the researcher claimed anonymity and place of work. Therefore the list would contain only these names and those officially have given the interviews for other sources. In total twelve editor level journalists' interviews were used for this research and in this section the findings are presented. Those who gave permission to use their real names either for the researcher or for other media outlets are as follows;

1 Tamrat Gebregiorgis, Managing editor and founder of Addis Fortune Newspaper. He has more than 15 years of journalism experience

2 Melaku Demisse. Editor-in-chief of Reporter Newspaper. He has more than 15 years of journalism experience.

3 Dawit Kebede. Managing Editor of Awrambatimes Newspaper. He has more than 5 years experience

4 Abiy Teklemariam. Managing editor of Addisneger Newspaper. He has more than 5 years of journalism experience

5 Eskinder Nega. Editor and founder of Menilik, Asqual and Satenaw newspapers (all of his papers are now banned to work in the country after the 2005 controversial election after the government accused him of inciting violence in the country which he out rightly denied it)

5 Tamrat negera. Editor-in-chief of Addis neger newspaper

6 Mesfin Negash. Editor-in-chief of Addis neger newspaper

7 Firew Abebe Editor- in- Chief Sendek Newspaper

The rest of the interviewees did not give permission for their real names to be used. Therefore for the purpose of convenience in discussing their responses for the questions posed by the researcher, pseudonyms are used when it is needed to mention names and quote their views. The pseudonyms used are Samuel Alemu, Belete Mamo, Yalew Gizaw, Genzebu Yibekal, Tefera Amlaku and Muktar Mohammed. These names are chosen randomly from among common Ethiopian names just to represent the real names of the journalists. It has no connection in any way with the real names of the journalists. And all the persons represented by these names are at an editor- in- chief levels and working as a journalist ranging from 5 to 20 years. Four of them (Samuel,A. Belete,M, Yalew and G,Genzebu) are from the online based news websites and the remaining from domestic traditional newspapers.

Alike the results of the survey findings the following section uses categories that best addresses the research questions and could help organize the responses of the journalists. Therefore as it was the case to present the findings of the survey the following features dictate the presentation of the interview findings too:

1 approaches to news coverage and ethical codes more or less shared by every journalist and assumed to be universal values and standards of journalism ethics

2 instruments used to self regulate media practices, like codes of conducts.

3 independence in practicing the profession and personal commitments to ethics

4 hierarchies of ethical values and principles

5 factors influencing behavior

6 evaluating one self and others in terms of ethical standards of their own.

7 descriptions of the political and legal environments where the practice is being done

Journalism Conceptions

In this section the researcher chose to first show the journalists' conception of journalism and what they think it should do in order to frame the context to understanding their views perceptions and interpretations of ethical values and principles that are going to be presented and discussed in the next sections and chapters of this paper. To put it in just a sentence, the common element which was found in all the responses of the interviewees as what journalism should be for them is that journalism is a tool to serve the society in informing it on what is going on around based on truth and facts. Yalew from the online based website says that journalism 'prompts the right of citizens to know what is going on around'. Solomon put it a bit differently. Though he still believes in serving the public he sees it from the point of view of what the public should do with it. He believes 'journalism must be the mouth piece of the public rather than for those who aspire to climb in to power'. There were also responses that conceptualize journalism to be serving the public in being a watch dog of the government. They take the role of journalism is mainly to expose government wrongdoings and work for their improvement though the dominant view is informing the public in every kind of stuffs which they think worth to talk about and make some sort of contribution for the public's life style. Tamrat Gebregiorgis went on to argue that the main responsibility he feels to have as a journalist is to inform. He argues against the traditional belief of the role of journalism to be informing, educating and entertaining. He said he does not think he is funny enough to entertain and well educated enough to educate others. Therefore he conceptualizes journalism as a tool just to inform on what is going on around. Muktar, an editor in chief for one of the domestic papers, do also share Tamrat's believe by stressing the role to be to reveal accurate information to the public so as to help on their decision making. In addition he thinks journalism should play a significant role in creating informed society. But the rest of the journalists added at least two more other functions in addition to informing the public. For instance Belete and Firew (Editor in chief for Sendek newspaper) believe in journalism 'to give information but most of all to stand for others and to serve as a watchdog for the people'. To Yalew, in a country where many are illiterate the role should be 'to inform and educate'. Therefore we can conclude from the interview results that the role conception of journalism among Ethiopians incorporates mainly informing, educating and serving as a watchdog. Therefore it is now possible to think of the rest of the findings concerning journalists' views, perceptions and interpretations within the context of the conceptions discussed above. In addition questions were raised whether in the first place do they agree in the relevance of ethics in journalism practices before going further and end up in the same response which indicates no relevance to ethics. The findings though confirmed that all of them do really care about ethics. The survey findings do also support it. The basic reason they all do care is in the belief that journalism is meant for the masses; therefore it needs to work with in a framework of ethical values and principles. Abiy Teklemariam's, managing editor for Addis Neger

newspaper, can be a good representative of all the responses. He said ‘As to me what is unique about journalism is its access to the public. And all extra burdens on the profession are from this unique access. So we need different ethical tenets for this unique behavior. Therefore I think journalists should know at least the basic tenets of journalism ethics because as to me what makes journalism different from other forms of writings is its reachability. It is meant for millions. Therefore a journalist should know journalism ethics’. In addition the results of the interview findings demonstrate that all the journalists do not think in the importance of unique ethical values and principles for their specific country and/or environment. In other words they do share the values and principles which are now working in many parts of the world and are considered to be universally applicable.

Universal Ethical Values

Literally all the interviewees, as it was the case for the survey findings, share universal values of journalism ethics to be part of their thinking too. For the sake of clarity purposes the researcher chose the approach for the presentation of interview findings concerning universal values to be based on its broad categories like seeking truth, independence, minimizing harm and accountability with details of each of their descriptions. The idea for classifying universal ethical values and their manifestation was taken from SPJ (Society for Professional Journalists) code of conduct). SPJ is an independent nonprofit international journalists association which is working to promote freedom of expression and the press around the world.

Seeking the truth and report it

In this part of the interview major emphases is given on the importance of sticking to facts in being ethical journalists though they have their own way of expressing it. Samuel Alemu one of the online news based webpage editor said ‘facts are the cornerstones of professional journalism. In whatever condition we are working, facts should never be compromised. You cannot blame the political environment or any other pressure to distort facts. It just has to be there all the time, if you are determined to be a real professional journalist’. Samuel for the question he was asked how he can compare truth seeking with Ethiopian journalism, went on to argue with a bit different response from what we observed in the survey and said ‘a journalist cannot have any reason to claim which makes him justify not to verify a story from all the sources’. He went on to argue that ‘don’t be emotional, take time to check facts. Check and recheck the substance of stories from third party bear in mind that the subject of the news might not always tell you the necked truth...’

However the rest of the interviewees take a little bit of accommodating view than Samuel. Many of them share the importance of verifying a story from all the sources but they do also leave a room to accept stories with a relatively fair level of verification. (Belete, Yalew and Genzebu (Online news editors) and Tefera and Muktar (Domestic press editors). Genzebu is still in the same category with the majority in believing to run a story with a relatively fair verification which might not exhaust all the option. He believes in the significance of Verification as much as

possible though he doesn't totally avoid options of reporting with all sources unchecked. He puts his belief as 'check if the info is correct or false, refer to other similar reports, check if not harmful and defamatory, check background of the source of info'. All in all it could be said that the findings of the interview clearly indicated that significance accuracy in ethical journalism is a well taken concept. Melaku's (editor in chief of Reporter newspaper) expression seems to work for all. He said that 'accuracy, talking about accuracy it is the pillar of journalism In Ethiopian case it is so important that most people or organization or government officials or powerful in terms of money try to influence and distort facts. And even to disseminate false information to influence and undermine the truth. Therefore accuracy should be given due attention'. Given such a firm belief in accuracy, the reason these interviewees gave for why they choose to leave such a room when it comes to verification is only one and the same. The political environment in the country is pretty difficult to have access to information and to confidently work on verification of stories from all sources. Therefore verification of stories seems to remain to be at a satisfactory level of getting convinced to be accurate. The political environment and its impact on ethical journalism performance is discussed in the previous chapter. This factor was chosen to be discussed in a more detail for it comes out to be playing a significant role in determining trends of Ethiopian journalism and ethical performance. This has been consistently proved in the survey, the interview and the case investigation of ethical dilemmas and decisions.

Balancing of stories and giving opportunity to respond to allegation is the other manifestation of truth seeking and minimizing harm. In this regard also, consistent to the survey results, almost all the subjects of the interview firmly believed in it to be a respected value of professional journalism. Just to mention some of the catchy and in a way representative response, Muktar from the domestic press has the following to say. 'This treatment of any cases in our life in a balanced way should be something in our blood. Balancing a story and giving opportunity to respond to allegations should not be something we are told or advised to do so. It should be just us. It should be in our blood. I don't think there is this different culture or country which do not believe in this. For that matter this should be the case whether you are a journalist or not. It does not matter what your profession is'. Well Muktar probably goes far in describing the value, however, the rest of the journalists do also show their firm belief in being balanced and giving opportunity to respond to allegation in their own words. 'It is very important and I believe everybody should follow and respect it' was how Tefera described it. 'I think when we are working on a story, we need to show some sort of compassion to whom our story might be affecting. It might be allegations or whatever. I think to show this compassion is human'. (Belete, Online news website editor). Tamrat (Fortune editor) even goes far and defines ethics in just a phrase. He said ethics is 'to be fair'. He went on to explain and said 'to be fair not only in journalism but also in whatever you do. That is ethics for me'. Yalew from the online media outlet has also quite similar view. He categorizes his ideas in four core values for him. They are 'fairness, avoiding biases, treating all stake holders equally and reporting and gathering professionally and skillfully'. Yalew's core values could be summarized as seeking the truth and minimizing harm in practicing ethical journalism.

There is a clear division between the journalists on the way they use undercover methods of news gathering which is another description of seeking the truth. It is mentioned in the survey results that there is a clear division among journalists in using, for example, confidential documents. Close to forty percent of them believe using confidential source is not unethical as long as it serves a big purpose like useful information to make a difference in issues of public interest. The others, around thirty nine percent, disagree and they simply take it as unethical whatever the case may be. Melaku Demisse editor in chief of reporter newspaper is against using any sort of undercover means of gathering news information. He said 'I will never use undercover means for it damages the reputation of professional journalism and it gives rooms for others who might not be journalists to take advantage of such room and exploit it to their bad motives or any criminal intentions. Therefore I choose to stick to the formal way of gathering information by always identifying myself as a journalists'. Samuel the online news site editor takes an opposite line with Melaku. Samuel believes that 'it is not always possible to get crucial information through the usual means of news gathering. Therefore journalists to achieve their professional objectives in revealing the truth might be sometimes forced to use undercover means. However this means should only be used if and only if the usual means fails to work'. It is, according to the interview results, Samuel's view which is the dominant perspectives though the survey shows a clear division. However there are still views found out from the interview results which are against undercover means at any condition. Muktar online editor uses a simple phrase to express his views, 'it is comparable to telling lies in a story'. Therefore for him telling lies are not at all acceptable in the process of making news, from the gathering to the final publication. As it was also stated in the survey findings it is also the same with interview findings that results of the responses were not impacted by the media type the journalists are working for. It is quite the same views obtained both from the online based journalists and editors and the domestic traditional press based ones with regard to accuracy and avoiding undercover methods of gathering information.

When seen from the perspective of normative theories of journalism ethics, the findings could be explained by both the deontologists and the teleologists view. The former explained the view by those who argue to use under cover stories as long as it is the only way to get crucial information for the theory emphasizes on the importance of considering consequences in choosing between the right and the wrong while the latter takes priority in applying the rules which are believed to be right. In our specific case it explains those who do not at all agree with the idea of using undercover means of gathering information for any reason. The dominant view though in both findings is that there are instances where it is possible to justify undercover means of gathering information. In other words the journalists view on such matters differs from case to case and the choice will also vary accordingly. This finding do somehow also leads us to consider virtue ethics which is a theory with elements from both the deontologists and the teleologists but leaving the focus mainly on individual characters. It is also consistently observed in this research that the ideological foci of the journalists mind can be categorized as to combine both the

deontologists and the teleologists. Therefore it is wise to consider framing in the solution in a compatible way with the ideologies reflected.

Talking about misrepresentation of facts and contexts, the interview results indicated that many of them are aware of the concept and hold the belief that every journalist should be committed to achieve them. Firew Abebe editor in chief of Sendek newspaper said ‘talking about seeking the truth will definitely require not misrepresenting facts or contexts. I think misrepresentation above all damages the credibility of the paper without which survival is unthinkable’. Tamrat Gebregiorgis do also share Frew’s view and he added also another perspective into it. He said ‘if people are convinced that you are representing what exactly they wanted to say and proved it again and again then access to information would be even be better.’ Genezebu would like to see it by taking himself on the sources shoe. Genzebu argues that he can imagine how painful and offensive it could to see ones view is misrepresented or put out of context. Therefore what he himself does not want to be a victim of, he won’t do it on others. Literally there is no one who disagreed with this concept. There is no doubt, on the bases of the interview results, that the journalists do have the awareness and the commitment and to a certain extent the passion to respect ethical values which they share them with other journalists around the world as it can be inferred from the universal codes of conduct. But the question remains to be why then we are seeing inaccurate, unbalanced, misrepresented facts and out of context reports in the private media and in the online websites. These problems were all accepted to exist and represent the current practices of Ethiopian journalism by the majority of the journalists in the self assessment they made in the survey and again confirmed by the interview findings too which you will see its detail later in this section. The dominant Factor to explain this case again continues to be the problem with the political environment and access to information. Further details on the nature of the political environment are in the previous chapter.

What are even more interesting are the interview findings that shows almost all descriptions of seeking the truth and minimizing harm have been listed by the interviewees as the core values of journalism which should never be violated. This lists since they were asked about them later in the interview would help further confirm the journalists’ firm belief in this values as they are already discussed in the previous paragraphs above. For instance for Muktar the values that should never be violated in journalism practices are ‘accuracy, objectivity and balance and for Tefera ‘truth telling, fairness and balance’. Belete believes ‘balancing and accuracy in reporting should never be violated’. Melaku (editor in chief of Reporter newspaper) stressed the view that ‘being ethical, fair and balanced should never and ever be compromised’

Independence

According to the findings of the interviews the journalists again have a strong and firm believe in the significance of independence in their profession. Tamrat Gebregiorgis (Managing editor of Fortune newspaper), one would say, take his commitment for the concept even further and went to argue that his independence excludes his own country and the public too. As he said his loyalty is rendered to his paper readers and he work for them independent of any other factors around. He does not even favor the majority at the expense of his target readers. And he said he remains free from any association that compromises his integrity in this regard. To take his words as it is, he said ‘our loyalty is not for Ethiopian people, Ethiopian pride, love or something like that in general or the government or anybody. We respect the country’s law whether we agree with it or not, but when it comes to loyalty we give it to our readers.’ Samuel did also stress the significance of focusing on truth telling in a way that makes the journalists to stay away from taking any side except the truth. Yalew has given to the idea of independence one of the top places in his hierarchy of values and principles of ethical journalism. He said ‘impartiality on political affiliation, relegion, advertisers and other utilities should never be violated in journalism career’. Melaku as usual sees the case of independence in the context of journalism in Ethiopia and the environment it is being practiced. He said ‘Journalists’ income is so low that government officials and business people might influence and threaten impartiality with money, some privileges and some opportunities. Therefore journalists should be alert to maintain their independence’. Melaku believes that loosing independence seriously damages credibility and above all takes away the great opportunity that could be exploited from journalism to the development of a country in various aspects ranging from democracy to poverty alleviation. This has been shared by many of the respondents and there was no interviewee who makes arguments against the idea of independence or has deviated perception of it. It was rather for many of the journalists at the top of their priority list in maintaining ethical values and principles. Consistent with the survey findings, the interview results would also show that there exist a strong belief in the importance of independence and avoiding any association, political, social and/or economic that could compromise their integrity across the board. This consensus covers various age groups, educational levels, work experience, position and other demographic characteristics. The question remains to be how far they are really independent in practice. The focus of this paper though is not on what is actually happening in the actual practice which rather is investigated, as it was discussed in the literature review section on the already researched area. The section clearly indicated that there are problems of ethical practices including independence. Their own self assessments researched in this paper have also revealed that they do all agree with the problems. The focus rather here is to assess the minds of the journalists and their understanding and perception of values and principles and their mechanisms to implement it. It is also in the scope of this study that identifying the factors that could contribute to fuelling ethical problems. By assessing the mindset and the factors influencing it would be possible to understand whether the trend of journalism practice would give effect to

ethical journalism or not. In addition it would be possible to locate the weakest spots and suggest a possible way out for the betterment of journalism in the country.

Instruments to check on Ethics

In this section efforts were made to find out the instruments used by the journalists and the media organizations to make sure ethical practices are underway in their profession. It is to be remembered that the survey findings indicated common sense and law of the country to be at the top of the list while codes of conducts either by their own organization and/or association codes are found out to be the least consulted tools.

The least used means of checking goes to codes of conduct either to their own or journalists' association codes. And this was the same with the online journalists too. Consulting their friends and colleagues and veteran journalists, referring the country's laws related to their profession do also take a significant position in their tools to check their works ethicality. The interview findings do also support as the case to be the same. The majority of them alike the survey findings which indicated a close to 70 percent of the journalists are mainly using their common sense to be followed by consulting editors, there is also an observable dominance in the view of common sense and consulting editors in the newsroom to be the instrument widely used to check on ethics. Though the majority claimed to have used their common senses and editors around, the importance of written codes was also accepted across the board. In an explanation to justify their contradictory comments on the importance of written codes and the relative no use of codes of conducts, they responded as they still believe in the role of their own senses to be the leading tool to consult. But they believe written codes could take over if there are a more viable and representative journalists associations or press councils. Here it should be noted that many of the private journalists in the country do have a big concern and reservation on the independence of journalists associations in the country.

It might be good to take some direct quotations to further understand how they try to support themselves in using various instruments to get assistance to reach to the right decisions in their works. Muktar the online news web editor put it a bit differently from others but still falls in the category of common sense. Common sense here is used in the sense that using the cumulative knowledge already existed in one's mind. Just to borrow Brenda Breit's (2004, 215) description it is better called 'good sense' than common sense'. Muktar said that 'I have a rational philosophy including everything therefore I quite often apply my philosophy in my stories treatment.' Muktar went on to explain that his philosophy is based on 'fairness, to put it in just a word'. Tamrat Gebregiorgis do also share his views. He said 'I do not really know where I got it from .But I have this strong sense of fairness in my thinking. Therefore I usually apply this thinking in my stories. Wherever I sense unfair things or unethical if you like, I would go for resolving it.' Melaku's view is also quite close to the two perspectives. He said 'you see from experience, I learnt lots of things and now I am quite often using my senses to lead me over the right direction. I got a full respect for codes of conducts and we are also working on that and we

soon have it in its full application, but I would say your cumulative knowledge you acquired so far do the trick.’ Watching international media outlets like the BBC and CNN in trying to learn how they treat their stories and giving stories to non journalists friends and colleagues to gather their reactions and get a sense of rightness or wrongness about the story before it is sent to publishing have also been mentioned by a couple of interviewees. For instance Yalew the online news web editor said ‘allowing non journalists staff members to read the story and comment on my fairness and balance and their reaction on the story is what I usually do.’ Here it should be noted that many of the private press organizations, domestic traditional and the Diaspora online news websites, have not yet developed their own code of conduct. As Gudeta, S.T (2008) research did also confirm the problem with self regulation mechanisms in the Ethiopian media landscape. Gudeta in his summary abstract on his theses indicated that ‘The finding of the research demonstrates that the practice of media self-regulation in Ethiopia is in its nascent stage. There are some media houses that have developed in house codes of conduct as ethical guidelines. However, only in very few media houses are the codes treated as an institutional ethical standard. In most cases, self-regulation predicates upon the will, consent and cooperation of the press industry. However, in Ethiopia the private/government dichotomy and the chasm among the private presses make institutionalizing self-regulatory bodies very remote.’ This could be another sign of less emphasis given to the relevance of code of conducts. But during the interview, all of the interviewees expressed the relevance and they claimed to have been working on it. In general it could be said that there exists to be too much reliance on the common sense for the majority of the respondents could not mention other more instruments they are using to assist them in their choices between the right and wrong. This would be a huge gap in trying to realize their firm belief in ethical values and principles observed and found out in the survey and the interview findings. It is also consistent with the ethical dilemma cases investigation done. The findings from this assessment are presented in the next section. The findings from both the survey and the interview concerning instruments used to further strengthen ethical practices would also lead to capitalize on virtue ethics theory to frame possible solution strategies in order to give effect to ethical practices of journalism in the country. The results informed that the journalists tendency is to rely on oneself or people very close to the working environments, like editors and fellow journalists, in seeking assistance to check on ethics. The virtue ethics theory do also give emphases on individual characters for addressing problems of ethics. Therefore if efforts could be made to apply virtue ethics theory, it would facilitate the betterment of journalism practices in the country. This would happen because the solution is based on the mindset of the journalists themselves. Therefore what is there already can easily be addressed through application of congruent means of achieving ethical journalism.

Approaches to Ethics

The approaches to ethics, as it was the case with the survey, was investigated by raising questions from which their responses and explanations would put them in one of the three dominant approaches of journalism ethics, deontological, teleological and/or virtue oriented theory of ethics. The approaches were discussed in chapter three. One of the questions focuses

on where journalists would fall in deciding when confronted with issues on the one hand harm a certain section of the society while on the other they could benefit the majority. Generally speaking the majority of the respondents believed in giving priority for the majority's benefit. But it was also found that there was in every explanation of their choice a tendency to consider their view might not always be consistent. In other words almost all the interviewees do believe that there might be cases which put them reject issues that still benefit the majority. For Samuel such cases could be 'any cases that feels shocking and challenges the conscience can override majority benefits. For instance I better report nothing about issues that could trigger ethnic conflicts though it is the truth and bring about the necessary change for my nation. But under normal circumstances I prefer to report any issue that could benefit the majority'. This view contain a blend of deontological and teleological perspectives of normative ethical theories in that they consider consequences at some conditions to be decisive and rules at other cases to determine their choice. This would lead to associate their perspectives and interpretations with the elements of virtue oriented theory approach. In this regard I agree with Breit (2004, 218) that 'virtue theory has both deontological and teleological characteristics, taking account of motivations, actions and consequences by trying ethics to virtuous characteristics.' The following paragraphs contain direct quotations from the interview responses that could even more confirm the approaches to ethics tend to follow a blend of the teleological and deontological views. In a direct similarity with what the teleological approach advocates as discussed in chapter three Tefera says 'I will base my decision according to what that story would bring about for the general public and as long as it is going to serve the majority, why not I would consider ignoring its bad consequences or I would simply try to minimize harms as much as I could and go for it.' Tefera however stressed that this belief itself is not a rule for him and he is flexible enough to consider the opposite and do otherwise if he still finds it convincing for his conscience. Tamrat's view is a bit different from others but still puts him in the same category. Tamrat stresses that 'am loyal to my readers and my readers are from different backgrounds and country. I don't stop for something that is believed to harm Ethiopia or national interest staff. As long as am respecting and operating in the law of the land I do it. I believe in truth the way I see it. I don't have the belief that my view is the whole truth. And truth the way I see it overrides anything. Therefore I am loyal and fair to them. I have a minimalist standard, am not combatant, militant, don't think am doing journalism to educate because my readers are much more educated than me and don't think am humors enough to entertain others. The only thing I think am doing journalism is to inform'. He went on and summarized his view by saying that the way to achieve ethical journalism is 'To be truthful for your own conscious'.

Tamrat's view is quite closer to the virtue oriented approach to ethics. If we still think about his view by taking two of his own phrases from above, 'loyal to my reader' and 'I believe in truth...the way I see it', again we will come to understand that he takes a blend of the deontological and the teleological views. He is loyal to his readers and he would serve their interest. This puts him under the category that considers outcome or utility based ethical approach. In his case his readers' satisfaction would be the consequence or the base line he is

concerned about. On the other hand he believes in truth and works for the truth the way he sees it would categorize his views with the deontologists. He was categorized under the rule or duty based approach to ethics category because his believe in truth would give him values and principles which he will be respecting them under any conditions. Therefore once again just like the other respondents his views are also best explained by the virtue theorists approach to ethics. Genzebu's view can best suit what I was trying to figure out how best the respondents view could be explained in terms of approaches to ethics. He believes 'rules can never work always when it comes to journalism. There are always cases that create conflicts of interest. In these cases I usually prefer to use my common sense and I follow it. I really wanted it to be the right choice but I may make mistakes too. But I see no other option. If I simply follow rules then my senses would find it really tough to accept them in some cases. For instance when I am sure that somebody is going to die because of my report and when I believe that story bring some sort of good benefits for the country I would be in a big problem to make the right decision to run or reject the story .I cannot really decide simply on the bases of rules. I have to sit down and listen my senses and then I will decide accordingly. That is it. However there are values and principles that should be always respected like being accurate and telling the truth'. Here again we can sense a blend of deontological and teleological approaches to ethics. More close to his views would be the virtue oriented approach to ethics theory though. On the one hand he argues rules might not always work and on the other hand he believes there are values and principles that could be taken as rules. Therefore we can deduct from his views that he chose to treat his choices case by case.

In general the interview findings with regard to approaches to ethics showed that virtue oriented ethical approach to ethics best describes the dominant view of the journalists. This has also been consistent with the survey findings.

Assessments of Ethical Performances

This section presents the results from the interview conducted to have their assessment of the private news media ethical performances. This was done in the intention that it would be possible to locate their values and principles and approaches to ethics too. The values and principles and their approaches to ethics could be located from the issues they raise to describe bad and good conducts in their assessment of ethical performances of the press. This assessment would also be seen in the context of the whole investigation of this project to locate their values and principles, approaches to ethics, instruments used to achieve ethical practices and factors influencing their job and behavior in order to figure out whether the trend would give effect to ethical journalism or not. The interview incorporated both the problems they think exist and their views on possible solutions too. It could be said that there is a consensus in the various problems of ethical practices in the country's journalism as did the content review show. The content review of this project was not discussed in detail for the reason that the results from the journalists assessment have indicated the same results. The findings have also pointed out that the political environment and lack of systematic approaches to addressing problems of ethics at the core of the reason for

the bad performance of journalism in the country. The system failure is expressed in terms of lack of instrument like codes of conducts and viable association for self regulation mechanisms across the board. This was also supported by the survey findings in that there was a clear lack of use of code of conducts and related means of self regulation among the majority of the journalists be it at an institution level or individually. As it is also assessed by the researcher except very few of them the majority of the private press institutions and the online news websites do not even have codes of conducts of their own, The online news websites up to the day when this paper was written do not have anything posted in their websites which states their code of conduct. What is mostly written is just a mission statement that expresses their commitment to provide Ethiopians with information.

However, the assessment showed that almost all of the journalists are concerned about the ethical problems dominating the country's journalism. The main problems listed can be generalized as problems of seeking truth and independence. The findings indicated that all the following lists of problems have been mentioned by many of the interviewees to be major problems of the private press , of both the domestic traditional press and the online news websites mainly based abroad;

1 confusion between facts and Opinions

2 lack of accuracy and verification problems

3 lack of balanced stories

4 favoring a certain group over the other

5 lack of depth in the analyses

6 lack of investigative stories.

In the paragraphs to be followed detail assessment of the respondents will be presented. In one of the evaluations that questions independence of the private journalism practices. Samuel from the online news websites asserts 'I observe crisis in most of Ethiopian websites, be it the traditional or the online news websites.They depict things beyond the ethics of journalism. They mostly devote themselves to gain political win rather than to win the hearts and minds of the mass. They obsessed in defamation and character assassination. Most of the reporters are not qualified, but politicians. Their reports are not fair, equilibrium and are far from reality. They have to walk extra mile to keep the ethics of journalism and fairness. And I do also stroinlgy believe that the main problem is the political environment in the country which forces people to extremes either for or against the system. I can also say journalists take for granted and accept what they are doing is right.' Tamrats from Fortune,a newspaper from the domestic press passes the same judgment.He said 'lack of professional competence, distortion too much, corruption too much, bias, intentional or corruption based prejudice too much, favoritism too much'. The interview findings demonstrate the two respondents judgment to be shared across the board as it was the

case with the survey findings too. Therefore much of the focus of the next paragraphs will be on the problems seen from their solutions perspectives as it was suggested by the journalists themselves. Eskinder Nega, a veteran journalist who used to run three popular newspapers argues the ‘the Ethiopians are capable of practicing their duties and right with freedom associated rights. The beginning and end of the problem is the ruling party’s behavior. Ethiopians are with a good culture of duty oriented behavior. The problem is not knowing their duty.’ Tamrat Geberegiorgis takes problem of accusing each other at the core. He said ‘we lack mutual respect. We do not recognize each other. We accuse each other of being a person with no integrity. For instance for five years we tried to establish a press council but we never reached to an agreement’. Tamrat though he tend to believe things are getting better from time to time, he still thinks a problem of institutionalizing the press remains to be a big challenge. He went on to explain how fifteen years ago was the problem of not being institutionalized impacting the quality of the press by saying ‘we started to be an editor in just twenty one years. The press because it is not institutionalized, it does not have a proper career ladder. Tamrat though believes that the press performs better than the past. Abiy does also feel the same He considers institutionalization problems to be at the core of the problem. He mentioned the same example with Tamrat. He said ‘for instance I become an editor as I almost started working except few years on reporting in other institutions. In other countries, to be an editor requires experience and knowledge on the techniques of the profession. But we do not have institutions.’ Talking about lack of institutions, it is not only the hierarchy ladder that was mentioned but problems of well thought codes of conducts and systems to implement them are mentioned by many as missing.

Abiy Tekelemariam, managing editor of Addis Neger newspaper, gives emphases on the political environment and its impact on the problem. He recognized the private media is suffering from various problems and he does share the stated lists of problems to be his evaluation too. Concerning the political environment Abiy has the following to say ‘there are many serious challenges. As a political journalist we fear not to go to jail, worrying and being suspicious while writing in order not to get labeled as favoring a certain political group. These are Ethiopian peculiar challenges. You see when you fear that it might take you to the court, or does something happen to you before that or the judge will interpret it differently, you could be pressured to consider self censorship. All this comes from the environment we are working in.’ His view is shared by Mesfin Negash and Tamrat Negera of Addis Neger newspaper which recently stopped publishing domestic publication and resort to the online journalism. The reason for quitting publishing, as they claimed, is fear of punishments from the government and almost all of the journalists working for the paper are now out of Ethiopia living in exile. Further details on the impact of the political environment and ethical journalism performances are discussed in chapter four. Abiy takes the fear further to the other end and relates it with the public. According to him, there is also journalists’ fear that their works might be taken as pro ruling camp. Such a fear is also shared by all respondents in the interview. The fear is basically being anxious not to be taken as pro ruling party journalists by the society which many think would make them out of business. Abiy did also mention ignorance of professional values among journalists to be the

major challenge for the lack of analyses and deep insight into issues covered by journalists. He believes ‘journalists are divorcing with the social sciences. Now in many instances we report on issues we do not know about. Without learning or reading about economics how far I can report about it, is my question and I think this is also another challenge’. Abiy takes this point to be a challenge for journalism practices around the world not only to Ethiopia. Dawit Kebede managing editor for the Awramba Times Newspaper does have a similar view with others. He associates the problem to emanate from the political environment According to his assertion ‘because the government does not want to hear or read any critical voices it is creating all the mess in the private press.’ Dawit gives an instance where the domestic press would be condemned to be ignoring the truth. He explains the case to be as ‘there are issues which you cannot write about. For instance you cannot write about oromiya national liberation front (ONLF), a gorilla fighting group, unless otherwise it is the way only the people in power would be happy about it. Otherwise if we try to balance it from other critical views from the ONLF it is not possible. If you try it, there is a problem. There are also people from the opposition camp whom the government is not happy about. Again if you try to write about them you know what will happen. Sometimes it is not only the laws we see. You have to be also conscious that whether your story brings bad consequences on you from the people in power’. This could also be one explanation why the journalists who know the values and principles of journalism, based on the findings of the survey and the interview, yet avoid certain truth from their stories which in effect make them ignore values and principles like fairness, balance and others in their stories. Dawit went on to argue for his case that the private press is unbalanced because access to information is not easy under the current political environment in the nation. He elaborates his case by saying ‘the government as a big institute, if it discourages the press how can it develop. We for instance plan to have their views from higher officials but it is clear they do not do it. They want only their views to be on our paper. But we want to cover other views too.’ A question of independence for Dawit also emanates from the political environment. He argues because the regime does not want to listen critical voices it just discourages independence and becoming difficult to stay critical and independent in reporting. He said ‘yes we are allowed to work in the country and do journalism but we cannot say we have the freedom one media would and should have to properly function.’ Melaku Demisse explained the problems in more detail and he asserts ‘one of our problems is we do not have a council or press clubs. When you even try to have it and call for a gathering, some new faces whom you do not know from where they are coming do appear and disturb the mood and create confusion. That is also another problem. Government information is always difficult. Let me tell u one instance, it is information about the newly built Dam .Shortly after its inauguration ceremony of starting to generate energy, we got a tip that its tunnel is wrecked in the middle and might be out of service for long and causes a big loss of maintenance cost. We wanted to check and verify it. The CEO of Electric Corporation, the institute in charge for the dam’s construction, did not want to give us the information. The energy minister simply told us to wait. Finally we saw the news in another foreign website. But sitting in the country we could not get it. You see this is how verification of

stories and unbalanced reports happen here and there.’ Dawit stressed the source of the problem to be the political environment by claiming that journalists in Ethiopia are not morally wicked had it not been for the environment they are working. He argued ‘there are accusations that the private press is causing conflicts or war among members of the society. I think there is no journalist with such a motive in Ethiopia. The accusation is coming from the people in power. It is painful and wrong attitude. Just like the politicians we are also citizens. We care about our own people. It is not fair to blame us like that.’ With regard to journalism values and principles it could be said that the interview and survey results of this paper supported Dawit’s argument. At least it is found out that the journalists know very well and show commitment and interest to journalistic values and principles.

The interview findings demonstrate that ethical problems of Ethiopian Journalism both in the traditional press and the online news websites which are accepted even by its own journalists (both in the survey and interview findings) emanate from mainly the political environment in the country. The first group of ethical problems is related to seeking truth. According to the findings the political environment is not conducive enough to seek the truth and report it. On the one hand lack of access to information is blocking them from reporting comprehensively and accurately in a balanced way. On the other hand fear of punishment is forcing them to be less informative and deny access to critical views except those who risk the consequences. The cumulative effect perhaps is creating an environment where extremely biased and politically motivated journalism practices in the country. The online and the domestic press in these findings are not different. The online media is also suffering from problems related to access to information. However the online media which are based abroad does not have a problem of fear of punishment for what they report. But problems of blockages of their websites and when they know that they are labeled as enemies by the ruling class in power that would make them suffer from the same problems with the domestic press. And the cumulative effect is also affecting ethical practices of their respective websites. It should be noted that the political environment is not the only source of problem identified. Problems related to self regulation mechanism have also been found out and you will find the discussion in the previous sections and in the discussion and conclusion chapters too. Further details on the political environment will be found in chapter four.

Influential Factors on Behavior and Professional Task

The relevance of trying to identify factors influencing behavior in general and daily professional exercises in particular is related to locating whether the current trend of journalism would give effect to ethical practices of journalism or not. By identifying the influential factors on the daily practice of journalism and in the overall moral behavior of the journalists, it would be possible to have a comprehensive picture of why the existing journalism practice is being what it is. So far we have investigated how do the journalists perceive and understand ethical values and principles of their profession, how do they want to achieve them and what kind of instruments are being used to do so, what are their ethics approaches and how do they evaluate their works within the context .And now in the following section we will see the findings on the influential

factors for their daily practices of ethical journalism and their overall moral behaviors. The findings concerning factors which influence moral behaviors can be summarized in to the following general categories. The list goes from the factor mentioned by many to the few.

1 Experience In journalism

2 Educational backgrounds

3 Parents and social life experience

The following have been found to be the factors with a direct influence on the day to day professional practices and choices of decision while the above are influencing the general moral behavior in practicing Journalism. Again these categories go from those who are mentioned by many to the least mentioned.

1 Political Environment

2 Financial short comings

3 Readers Interest

Consistent with what the survey findings and the interview results approaches to ethics showed, the findings on the factors directly affecting behaviors on ethical decisions in their day to day activities are found out to be the political environment. Though there are also various factors mentioned as influential it was this factor which is dominantly mentioned by the respondents. It is taken as the major factor by all the respondents, though relatively speaking shortage of resources and readers interest on politically extreme views against the ruling class was found out to be influencing ethical practices among some of them. What is more interesting is the online journalists who are based abroad do also put the political factor to influencing their ethical behaviors in journalism practices. It should once again be important to remember that the findings from the survey and interview on various perspectives of ethical journalism practices in Ethiopia have demonstrated that there is quite similar values and principles, ways of achieving ethics (instruments) and approaches to journalism ethics among the online news website journalists and the domestic press journalists. In addition they do also share views on the current assessment of the ethical performances of the private press and the main causes for it. The only difference was related to fear of punishment on stories they want to publish. the online journalists have no such problem because they are working abroad beyond the control of the regime in Ethiopia.

On the other hand experience in journalism and educational backgrounds together with upbringing and parents were identified as factors to generally impact the journalists' behavior in their professional practices though they are not directly impacting them on day to day bases. It could be seen as they are the factors that gave them the framework of their moral behaviors

through which they are looking at Journalism. In the following section you would read some of the journalists' views that helped reach the above mentioned findings.

Samuel from online based news website says 'I would say my years of experience in journalism and education background are framing my moral behavior. Some might say upbringing and living in the society But when I see my background and the way I brought up it would definitely be a different me than I am now. I think it is my experience together with my educational background that defines my moral behavior and its source'. Tamrat from the domestic press Fortune has a closer view with Samuel. He doubts his upbringing to have any contribution to his behavior claiming that he was raised up in areas where the moral values which he thinks he possess now might not be around at all. He thought he could not locate where the influence might be. He said 'do not know but I have a deep sense of fairness. Fairness to all, regardless of race, color friendship, country or any other factor is relevant to our profession. In the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia all were equal to me. A war with Somalia the same. I don't favor for any national interest or anything of that type. I do not take sides for anybody, race, color, language'.

Tamrat's view is a little deviated from others in a sense that he detaches himself from his country. The rest expressed their favor to be the people of Ethiopia and their country. But what is more of a concern for this paper and for this particular section is what is influencing Tamrat to have this frame of moral behavior. Though he could not locate it himself, it perhaps could be his experience in journalism that has the influence on his moral behavior. It might be possible to identify his journalism experience to be the influential factor from his expression which contains fairness as the key word. Basically this fairness is a value which is quite often associated in discussions about ethical journalism. And probably Tamrat's exposure to this value in his more than fifteen years of experience might have an influence in framing his behavior.

Both Samuel and Tamrat make the same points regarding the factors they think are directly impacting day to day journalism practices. Both believe that there is a difficult environment they all are working in. Besides they both do not think other factors are influencing the day to day journalism practices. For instance they both believe that advertisement and readers are not impacting the profession in Ethiopia to the extent it demands compromising professional integrity. Tamrat has to say the following. 'I don't think advertisers are influencing ethical journalism in Ethiopia. It is because the business model of many news papers is based on their readers not advertisements.' Except few like Reporter, Addis Admass and Fortune newspapers, Tamrat argues that even papers like his which their major source of profit is not from the buying readers but from advertisements are not affected by interferences from advertisers in a way that compromises integrity. The reason for the absence of such influences, according to Tamrat, is that the advertisers do not normally demand such services that compromise integrity. This perhaps might be related to the country's development level where the competition for seeking advertisements is not yet fierce that advertisers should compete to the extent of manipulating mass media to their interest.

On the other hand quite a significant number of interviewees mentioned readers' interest to be influencing directly the day to day activities and ethical practices of journalism. Tefera said 'most readers in the domestic market like to hear a highly critical of the ruling power stories than modest ones. Therefore journalists tend to get voluntarily influenced for this interest which in effect could lead to unethical practices of journalism like distortion and putting stories out of context and others. Sometimes you might even see taking tips of sensational stories the readers might love from street venders of newspapers. It s really funny when you see a street vendor dictating an editor of a newspaper on what to write about if he or she wants to get as many readers as possible.' This factor has been mentioned by two third of the respondents. It is highly rated factor among the journalists.

Parents and the social environment where they grew up were also mentioned as a factor by one fourth of the respondents to be influential in their frame of moral behavior. For instance Genzebu from the online based news website said 'parents are the most influential for me. The place where I live and customs are also influencing me and much of my reactions to things. When I take time and observe it, it emanates from what I was used to see in my family and in the community I grew up with.' The rest of the respondents', who took parents and their social life as influential factor, description is quite similar with Genzebus views.

Findings from Ethical Dilemma Cases

This section presents the findings from the assessment made to look into the choices and judgments of journalists when they are faced with stories that could possible create ethical dilemma. Case stories have been developed on the bases of real happenings in journalism and a slight modification was made to fit into the Ethiopian context. The story cases contain issues that would lead to choose between equally important ethical values and principles of journalism. The first case contains a conflicting value of informing the public on what is going on around and taking care of graphic images that could disturb their audiences. The second case is about minimizing harm and public rights to know. In the third case we have conflicting issues of national interest and telling the truth. These three cases were presented to the journalists and asked how they could handle it.

There are also various statements that are believed to influence in either positive or negative way the decisions on how to handle the stories put forward to them and were asked to rate their significance for their decisions. You can see the details of these statements in the questionnaire from the appendix. It is both qualitative and quantitative methods that are used to assess their judgments from the three cases. Interviews were used to seek their explanation and a survey was also made to gather their ratings of influential factors. The first thing they were asked to do was to read the cases and decide whether they report it or not. The second step was to read the lists of statements which contain factors that could influence their decisions and rate their level of importance to their decisions. The design of the method was informed by a Defining issues Test DIT method of assessing judgments. The core reason to be informed by the DIT method is to

even better understand the journalists' way of thinking with regard to ethical values and principles which is at the center of this research project. The DIT technique suggests a better way of filling the gap on limitations of interviews. James Rest (1979) has the following to say on the DIT test;

'The DIT is a device for activating moral schemas (to the extent that a person has developed them) and for assessing them in terms of importance judgments. The DIT has dilemmas and standard items; the subject's task is to rate and rank the items in terms of their moral importance. As the subject encounters an item that both makes sense and also taps into the subject's preferred schema, that item is rated and ranked as highly important. Alternatively, when the subject encounters an item that either doesn't make sense or seems simplistic and unconvincing, the item receives a low rating and is passed over for the next item. The items of the DIT balance "bottom up" processing (stating just enough of a line of argument to activate a schema) with "top down" processing (not a full line of argument so that the subject has to "fill in" the meaning from schema already in the subject's head). In the DIT we are interested in knowing which schemas the subject brings to the task (are already in the subject's head). Presumably those are the schemas that structure and guide the subject's thinking in decision-making beyond the test situation'

(James Rest, 1979,1)

Findings of the Case Investigations

Case One

The findings are presented by combining both the interview and the survey results. In order to understand their responses comprehensively the whole text of the first case is presented below;

“Freelance photographer Gregory Marinovich captured the prize-winning photos in Soweto on September 15, as a mob savagely murdered a man suspected of being a spy. In all, six photographs were made available by the Associated Press: the suspected spy being led from a train station by five men, dragged down the street, beaten, stoned, stabbed and, ultimately, doused with gasoline and set afire. “

According to the results of the survey 62.1% said they will cover the story using all the images captured and 34.5% chose not to cover it and the rest 3.4 % fall under the undecided category. The following chart shows the summary of the journalists' responses in rating the statements with factors believed to be influencing decisions.

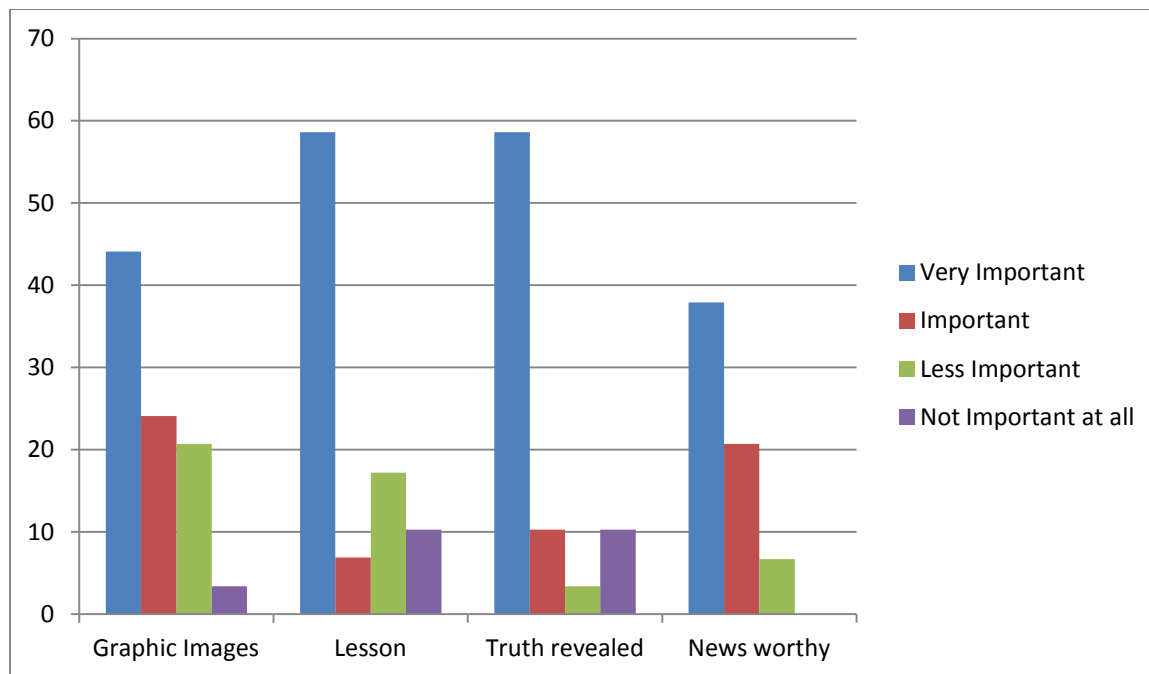


Figure 9

As it is seen in the above chart the two main reasons for those who chose to cover the story are prioritizing on the relevance of the story to be a good lesson and revealing the truth. On the other hand those who chose not to cover it are more concerned about the graphic nature of the images. Though the majority of the journalists chose to cover, there is a significant size of the respondents (34.9%) who chose to reject it. This tells us about the existence of a mix of approaches to ethics. On the one hand predetermined values like the public right to know and telling the truth prevails. On the other hand there are concerns of consequences to the extent of rejecting stories like avoiding graphic images in consideration of consequences not to be disturbing for readers. We can also learn from this that issues like revealing the truth and using them as lesson are considered to be not important at all by 1/10th of the journalists. This would be another showcase of the existing various approaches to ethics. As we will see from the next cases discussions also it was found out that support for sticking to rules and values would rise at one case and fall down to another. This is also a reflection of combining the deontological and the teleological approaches to ethics. These results are pushing to highlight the relevance of virtue oriented ethical approaches in giving effect to Ethiopian Journalism as the case was supported both in the survey and the interview findings discussed in the previous sections. Here are selected responses of the open ended questions for the story in Case 1 of the survey to explain the why of their decisions in their own words. The selection was made in considering responses to be representative of all. In other words it is a summary of their responses. Names are not stated because the questionnaire does not require names. But the name of their media organization is included for those who fill in the space that asks their place of work.

A journalist from Sendek Newspaper said ‘the first and the main thing is the media should care for the public moral. With regard to me, due to this reason the picture should not be published or broadcasted.’ Another journalist from the same paper said ‘yes I will cover it because of its news worthiness and also the public must know what is going on. But I will verify its authenticity’ A journalist from Google Newspaper emphasizes on its graphic nature and he said ‘no, no, no, because it is too much disturbing to see for my readers’. But his fellow journalist in the same paper has an opposite view and he is for the public must know on what is going on around.

The journalist from Awramaba Times explained his reason to cover the story by describing how he would do that. He said ‘yes...I should write strongly advising parents to control their children not to see it. My main reason is that the picture speaks the kind of system rampant in the country. It could be used as addressing the inhuman treatment that is going on in the country. Its publication has a nationwide, if not international, effect. It helps the community to see by its own eyes what is taking place, therefore take appropriate and reasonable measures.’ This response is an indication of his approach to be considering the importance of various factors and seeking a solution depending on each case he is faced with to handle them rightly. It could be said that it is typical of virtue oriented approach which is found out to be the case across the findings of this research. On the contrary a journalist from Reporter newspaper argued by saying ‘after all we all are human beings. A rational human being would never like to see this. Therefore I totally avoid it.’ A journalist from the same paper has an opposite view from his fellow journalist. He said ‘yes I will cover the story no matter what the picture captures. Any type of picture can be published as long as it served revealing the truth’.

In general it could be concluded that the findings from case 1 demonstrate the existence of contradictory news approaches prioritizing various values and principles of journalism ethics.

Case Two

The second case was used for the assessment of their judgment. The story presented is as follows;

‘A prominent figure in the politics of your country has told you a story about a senior person from his own party that could damage the credibility of the person in the eyes of the general public. The story accuses the person of conspiring against the interest of the party and their huge numbers of supporters in the country. You tend to believe the source and you have clues that it might be true. But you do not have the evidence to prove it. The source has given you the story under condition of anonymity.’

The general response whether they report the story or not indicated that 72.4 percent of them cover it and 17.2 percent do not. A little more than 10 percent of them (10.3 percent) are undecided. The following chart shows the summary on the factors that influence their judgment of choices.

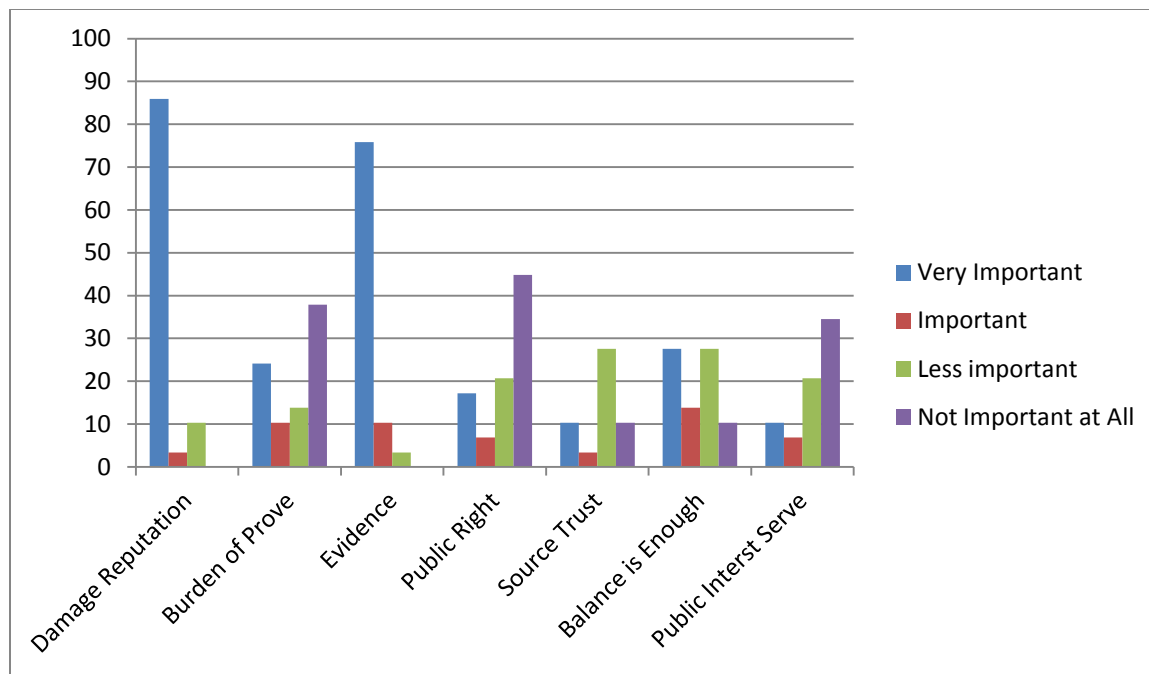


Figure 10

As it can be observed from the chart above the two most important reasons influencing decisions are taking care of the damages that could happen to the person's image and reputation and verification of facts from all the sources that could at least make sure the truthfulness of stories. On the other hand the public right to know and leaving the burden of proof on the accused are found out to be on the top among the not important at all categories. This again would be another showcase for the importance of each of the ethical values would vary depending on the case and the judgment of the journalists. This in effect leads us to realize that various approaches to ethics would be applied for different cases that would inform the relevance of an approach that has a framework of entertaining various approaches that leaves the decision to the individual or a group with understandable flexibility. For instance revealing the truth has given a very important place for case one while a not important at all place for Case two. It was closely similar with the case of considering consequences. In case one for instance the graphic images consequence in disturbing the readers has of course been given an important rate. But comparatively speaking it was not rated as very important to be for many as it was in Case two in taking care of the damages it might cause for the subject of the story. In Case one it was 44.1 percent of them that rated consequences relevance to be influential in their decisions while 85 percent of them do it for case 2.

The above results would lead us to consider the virtue oriented theoretical approach to frame the existing journalism practice in Ethiopia. It is because this approach has elements from the two dominant views of ethical approaches, deontological and teleological, with leaving the final decision to the individual. The following paragraph contains responses for the open ended questions seeking their explanation on the why of their choices for handling Case two. They are

chosen to be representative of all the responses. It is done so because there are many similar answers for the same question.

Just to start from those who chose to report the case, let us see what a journalist from Awramba Times has to say. For this journalist the most important thing is not the subject of the story or its consequence. He said ‘yes.....It s the information that matters more than the name of the source If I tend to believe it according to the case then am on the side of accuracy’ A journalist from Reporter newspaper do share this view. He said ‘yes....as long as I believe the credibility of any source I will take the story. That is it.’

On the contrary a journalist from Capital Newspaper stresses on the consequences and said ‘I do not report any story that damages credibility of any person if I do not have the evidence to prove the allegation’ Another journalist from Addis Admass shares this view and argues ‘Objectivity (making certain the claim is factual) is the first principle, especially when the claim is harmful for somebody.’ Both the journalists capitalize on the importance of evidence. However it should be noted that the findings from the survey and the interview have shown that verification of stories from all the sources might not be a binding principle for many of the journalists for the reason they mentioned as serious problem of access to information. Therefore the concern here is for evidence and the findings show, it perhaps emanates from the care they want to take to minimize harm from what their report could possibly cause. This could again be another sign of the flexible nature of using values and principles depending on circumstances and the role of individual characters in passing judgments. That is why virtue oriented ethical approach would best fit the country’s journalism practice to give effect to the development of ethical journalism.

Case Three

The text of the story presented in case three is as follows:

‘The reporter in her coverage of election stories has learnt that one of the prominent politicians running for the prime minister position of the government was involved in a crime that killed three people twenty five years ago. The crime was done with the knowledge of the then government that it was a fight against ethnically fanatic groups. It was also believed that it was in the national interest of the country. If the reporter writes the story and reveals its name, the person’s life will be at risk from the fanatic groups. And the reporter proved from different sources that his life will be at risk if the story is out.’

58.6 percent of the respondents indicated their judgment would be publishing the story and 20.7 percent chose to reject it while another 20.7 percent of them indicate they could not decide and chose to mark the undecided box. The following chart is the summary of responses for the statements rating on the factors that influence their decisions.

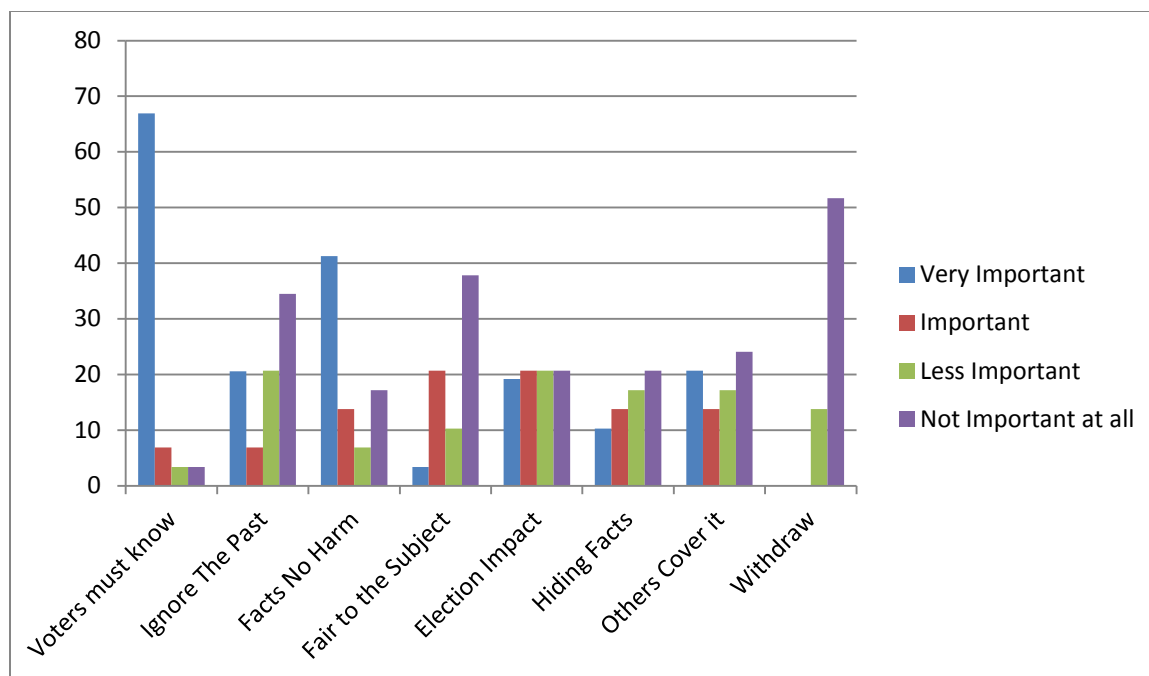


Figure 11

The values like the public right to know which could not convince journalists judgments in case two have managed to get it here in the third case. As clearly seen in the above chart the top rated factor to influencing decisions in handling the story in case 3 is public right to know (voters must know). It managed to get close to 70 percent of the respondents' approval. On the other hand what has been very important for the decision made in case two, like taking care of personality damage, it has been rated by many as totally unimportant when it comes to the third case. You can see the rate that indicated fairness with the subject in the above chart. It is only 3.4 percent of the respondents who consider it as very important.

These findings above would even further strengthen the findings that Ethiopian Journalists are making use of their values and principles on case by case bases. In other words what has been very important in a certain situation could be less important in another situation. This would lead to a suggestion that the framework of devising a mechanism which would give effect to ethical journalism in Ethiopia should be informed by virtue oriented approach to ethics.

The findings from the open ended questions' responses would even more strengthen the suggestion above. A journalist from Addis Admass news paper says 'yes I will report the story because the general public has the right to know about their candidates.' On the contrary a journalist from Capital Newspaper argues 'no I do not report it because it is a national interest and also his life'. Awramba Times'es journalist shared his view and said 'no, I do not report it. First of all there is this element of national interest, secondly publishing it has no relevance because it was done 25 years ago.' The journalist from Sendek Newspaper sees it from the point of telling the truth. He said 'yes...if the crime can be verified with evidence I report it because it

is the news and the truth.’ A journalist from Awramba times is concerned more on losing one’s life and he said ‘If the report will take one’s life, then I don’t think it is worth mentioning a name. But if without the name the report loses its worthiness therefore I will reject it’. On the contrary, what is interesting here is a journalist from Reporter Newspaper even believes in risking a journalist’s life in order to reveal the truth. He argued ‘yes. If it is the journalist’s life which is at risk, it is a risk that comes with the job. If this person had killed before he might do it again and doesn’t deserve the position he is running for. Running the story might actually save a life, in addition to being good journalism. Of course I report it when verified with multiple sources of evidence’. The above responses clearly shows the various perspectives of Ethiopian journalists in handling the same story and the findings support the relevance of virtue oriented approaches to ethics to give effect to ethical journalism in Ethiopia.

Chapter Six

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter is about revisiting the key findings, discussing the theoretical and practical implications and drawing conclusion. The discussion will be framed on the bases of the following lists of general categories of the research questions of this research Project.

- 1 What are the values and principles of ethical journalism among Ethiopian journalists?
- 2 How do they try to achieve it and what is their approach to ethics?
- 3 How do they evaluate ethical practices of journalism in Ethiopia?
- 4 What does influence the journalists' performance of ethical journalism?

Ethical Values and Principles

The findings of this research, from the survey, the in depth interview and the DIT test informed case analyses all uncovered that Ethiopian journalists do share universal ethical values and principles. The universal values and principles are based on Roberto Herrscher's (2002, 285) proposition. His rationale for the proposition of universal ethical values and principles is that 'It would help solve the problems created by governments, economic groups, and journalists around the world who hide behind ideas of cultural relativism to defend communication systems that keep them in power and the people in ignorance'. Quoting Fernando Savater (1978) he further strengthened his view that '... the shady undemocratic regimes that—pretending to defend local traditions, national culture, and sovereignty—are really defending the authoritarian clinging to power of a local elite, the repression of opposition, and their own reaction to modernization and change.' Therefore the assessment of Ethiopian journalists' values and principles was made taking into account the rationale of Roberto Herrscher's universal ethics and the current controversial political environment for the freedom of the press in the country. Ethical code of the society of professional journalists (SPJ) was also consulted in developing these categories for its codes are also meant for universal application.

One of the major elements of universal values is related to seeking the truth and reporting it. Ethiopian journalists have expressed their belief and commitment in the significance of seeking the truth in their profession. One of the values attached to seeking the truth is avoiding misrepresentation of facts or context. The findings demonstrated that both the online media and the traditional press journalists do take avoiding misrepresentation of facts and/or contexts as a very significant value in their profession. All the three methods employed, survey, in depth interview and ethical dilemma case analyses confirmed that the journalists hold it as their very important value. In addition the results revealed that the more the journalist is experienced the more it gives value to it.

Truth seeking can also be manifested in testing accuracy. Accuracy can be achieved through verification of stories from all sources of information. This research revealed that there appears to be division of opinion on how to take verification as a value. The dominant view, with more than 50 percent of the population strongly believes that verification of all sources is very significant for the profession. The other group of journalists (35 percent) chose to see the issue in context and attached a relatively less importance to this value. Both groups have no difference in taking verification of stories in general to be an important value for their profession. The difference lies in trying to value it within the context of the existing political environment in the country and its impact on journalism practices. The first group with more than 50 percent of the journalists insists in sticking to verifying stories from all sources under any condition while the rest disagree and go for verifying stories to a reasonable extent but not from all sources which for this group is an impossible case scenario in the country. The journalists attached problem of access to sources of information in the country to develop the idea of less focus on verification of stories from all sources. This lack of access to information if accompanied by verifying stories from all sources could lead to the total seizure of press publication, they argue.

Avoidance of undercover methods of news covering has also been investigated as part of the value in seeking truth. Almost all do in principle agree that it should be avoided. When it comes to cases where all the traditional means of news gathering, i.e. trying to obtain information by revealing the true identity would all fail and yet the information needed is believed to be crucial, 40 percent of the journalists believed in pretending not to be a journalist as long as it serves to get the crucial information while the rest disagreed and chose to stick to the traditional view of avoiding undercover means of news gathering. But it was also demonstrated in the findings of this research that except when all the options seem to be not working and some degree of importance with the information needed is attached, like public and national interest, all the journalists expressed their beliefs in the importance of avoiding undercover methods of news gathering and expressed their commitment to it as part of their professional value. As it is further explained in the interview the commitment to avoiding undercover stories arise from the fear not to expose the profession to wrong culture of deceiving.

Giving equal opportunity to respond to allegation could also be taken as a manifestation of seeking truth. In this regard there is a unanimous agreement of its relevance for the profession. More than 90 percent from both the domestic and the Diaspora journalists attach a very significant importance with this value. The interview and the ethical dilemma case analyses results have also shown the same results and explaining it to be one of the core values that should be respected all along in the profession.

We can conclude from the above stated findings, Ethiopian journalists from online or traditional press, do hold truth seeking as their professional value and if there appears to be differences in the interpretation of the concept of telling the truth, it comes from the question of how to apply it but not why to apply it. In other words the findings demonstrated all journalists in principle do

value truth seeking and reporting it in their profession. There is no debate or division in its relevance.

Minimizing harm is another feature that defines universal ethical values as it was proposed by Roberto Herrscher. In this regard the findings can be summarized in a way that stresses the relevance of a case by case treatment stories to avoid or minimize harm is what the majority of the journalists hold as the right value for their profession. Though there are journalists who insisted to uphold avoidance of harmful stories at any condition, the majority prefer treating issues on case by case bases. The detailed explanation for their rationale in the in depth interview indicated that a kind of cost benefit analyses approach is used to determine the value of a story believed to contain harmful elements for an individual or a group. If its benefits outweighs in a sense that serves the majority's interest, its harmful elements would not be reason enough to discard the story. Therefore benefits are at the core of valuing stories with harmful elements among Ethiopian journalists.

Independence does also come to the list of universal ethical values. Impartiality is one of the values that have been used by various codes of ethical conducts as a way of defining independence. Journalists are supposed to avoid favored treatments of any individual or group interests. Ethiopian journalists do also literally speaking have a consensus on the significance of staying away from being partial in their profession. The important point to raise here is that the findings from the methods employed here uncovered that Ethiopian journalists' value independence as to be very important for professional and ethical journalism to grow. They expressed their values to independence by complaining interferences that are impacting their work. When it comes to interference in their professional tasks from owners and/or bosses of their working places, it was learnt that more than 2/3 of them do not experience interferences. They do all mention though to experiencing interference from the political environment either directly or indirectly. They mentioned fear of reprisals punishments and lack of access to information is negatively impacting ethical journalism in Ethiopia. They argued when you fear, you hide a certain part of the truth and when you lack access to information, you publish incomplete stories which both lead to unethical practices.

Another indicator of independence which is refusing gifts, favors, political involvement and other similar features have been taken as a very important value among Ethiopian journalists. There was no observable differences in this value.

Approaches to Ethics

The major reference concepts employed to assess the ethical approaches of Ethiopian journalists were the three dominant theories of approaches to ethics. These are Deontological, teleological and Virtue oriented approaches to ethics. In the final analyses, based on the interview, the survey and the case analyses findings, it can be drawn that virtue oriented theoretical approaches to ethics would better describe Ethiopian journalists approach to ethics.

The framework through which the journalists' ethical approaches were assessed is on the bases of figuring out where their priorities lie in deciding the relevance of news stories. Is it either on the consequences of the stories or on the potential it could have to violate principles and values of ethical journalism, they do measure relevance of stories were the key question used to investigate approaches to ethics.

In the final analyses, it was discovered that the majority of Ethiopian journalists consider majority benefits and strict rules to be the grinding principle of approaching ethical decisions in their profession. These two points are contradictory in their nature. If a story is serving the majority interest then it could mean that a story even if it breaches ethical rules and values could be covered. On the contrary it could be seen as to mean, even if a story is serving or benefiting the majority if it breaches ethical rules, it should not be reported. The Ethiopian journalists however argued that they apply both approaches on case by case bases. As it was found out in the research, in instances where a story has harmful elements for an individual or group of people but benefiting the majority, almost there is a consensus to give priority for the majority. On the other hand this approach will not always be applicable in that many argue there are cases where you should give priority to rules but not for the benefit of the majority. For instance issues that could trigger ethnic conflict even if they are truth to be told and might be serving the majorities interest in finding solutions for the problems of the majority many prefer to avoid it and follow their principles of not covering issues that could cause violence. In this regard the rules could be said override the majorities benefit. Many do also consider their conscience to be influential in choosing between what is good and bad. When the stories consequence would still be serving the majority there are many journalists who still could reject it and follow some rules which could go with their conscience for the specific case at stake, according to the finding observed in the interview results.

The above findings have also been reflected in the assessment of instruments used by the journalists in order to give effect to their ethical performances. It was found out that the majority of the journalists are not using any codes of conducts of their organizations or associations of journalists. Most of them are mainly using their own common sense to decide on issues. This common sense turns out to be parallel with the idea of conscience as discussed in the above paragraph, according to the interview findings. And this common sense in one case prioritizes rules over consequences and at other times vice versa. That is why the researcher argues for the virtue oriented ethical approaches to framing any mechanism which is intended for giving effect to ethical journalism in Ethiopia.

Self assessment of Ethical Performance

The findings indicated that all the following lists of problems have been mentioned by many of the subjects of this research in all the phases of the methods employed to be major problems of the private press , domestic traditional press and online news websites mainly based abroad;

1 confusion between facts and Opinions

2 lack of accuracy and verification problems

3 lack of balanced stories

4 favoring a certain group over the other

5 lack of depth in the analyses and

6 lack of investigative stories.

The entire ethical problems listed above have also been found out to be the values and principles of almost all the journalists, according to the in depth interview findings and open ended question responses together with ethical dilemma case analyses. In other words Ethiopian journalists do confess that they are violating their own values and principles. Of course as it could be seen in the chapter that discusses political environment and journalism in the country the reasons for the violation of their own values are found out to be mainly the political environment to be followed by lack of institutionalized systems of achieving ethics. The researcher suggests on the bases of its findings that virtue oriented development of ethical codes of conducts both at an institution level and at a national level would solve part of the problem. It becomes obvious that the political environment should be better and conducive if major solution is needed.

Factors Influencing Ethical Performances

The findings concerning factors which influence moral behaviors can be summarized in to the following general categories. The list goes from the factor mentioned by many to the few.

1 Experience In journalism

2 Educational backgrounds

3 Parents and social life experience

The following have been found to be the factors with a direct influence on the day to day professional practices and choices of decision while the above are influencing the general moral behavior in practicing Journalism. Again these categories go from those who are mentioned by many to the least mentioned

1 Political Environment

2 Financial short comings

3 Readers Interest

Theoretical Implications

We can see theoretical implications of the findings on the bases of the major findings of this research. One of the major findings of this paper can be summarized as to be Ethiopian journalists do share values and principles of ethical journalism with a universal application in their nature. In other words what are proposed to be universal values of journalism ethics have been reflected in the values and principles of journalism ethics. One of the theoretical implications of this finding will be to rethink the argument going on around on the difficulties of developing a universally applicable ethical values and principles of journalism. Specially the concerns and suggestions that the developing world is faced with ethical dilemmas between mostly referred as westernized ethical values and the respective social, economic and political backgrounds of developing countries journalists turns out to be either exaggerated or as Roberto Herrscher's (2002, 285) argues would be considered to be problems 'created by governments, economic groups, and journalists around the world who hide behind ideas of cultural relativism to defend communication systems that keep them in power and the people in ignorance'. It is said so because in this research what is found out to be the values and principles of journalists in one of the developing countries, Ethiopia, turns out to be quite closer to what has been considered as western or universal ethical values and principles. The fact of the matter is these journalists do also hold values quite similar with the universally advocated journalism ethical values and principles. There was no difference or ethical dilemma that has been observably varied from these values and principles. For instance Ebo (1994) argued that African journalists are faced with ethical dilemma between the conception of development journalism that requires them to have a closer working relationship with governments and the ideal of western journalism to be independent. He might be right in that the political environment in many African countries demand such a relationship. But this does not mean that it is the right way of developing ethical journalism or that what the journalists value. In this research it was confirmed that the journalists hold values that are said to be universal and also express their problems with the political environment that as Ebo rightly said it which demands them to be working in good terms with the government which they claim to be one of the major reasons for unethical practices in the country.

The other theoretical implication of this paper comes with the findings of journalists approach to ethics. According to the findings and the final analyses of this research project Ethiopian journalists approach cannot be described either by the deontological or the teleological perspectives. This is because their perspectives to handle ethical matters depend on various cases they might be face with and their dependence on common sense as it was better termed by Breit (2004) "good sense" of individual journalist. Therefore the results has an implication that any mechanism which might be developed for the betterment of ethical practices would be better informed and described by virtue oriented approaches to ethics. This approach has been chosen for its major element that leaves decisions for the individual with a virtue matches perfectly with the existing mind set of journalist in their handling of ethical matters.

The issues of political environment and journalism practices, to my knowledge, have never been associated with the idea of fueling unethical practices. Many so called oppressive regimes rather use the term irresponsible and unethical media in order to pass rules and regulations that would discourage journalism practices. But this research has revealed that oppressive political environment would even exacerbate unethical journalism by journalists with a good knowledge and commitment to ethical practices. These journalists would be forced to entertain unethical practices and continue to be the same even when workings in a better environment. For instance it is observed in the content and literature review that unethical journalism is rampant in the online media of Ethiopian journalism practices. This has been confessed by the journalists themselves in the self assessment of ethical performances which you can find the details in chapter five. The online media mainly is used by journalists who live outside of their country in the western world, United States and Europe. The political environment in the country where they are residing is liberal and totally different from their home country for which they are doing journalism to. However since the environment in the home country is not open to them and suffer from lack of information and the already established enemic relationship between the press and the people in power is forcing them to still continue violating their own values and principles. As it was discussed in chapter five even if there are deliberate distortion of facts and observable biases in the report, much of the problem comes from lack of access to the other side and being forced to be dependent on one side of the story. Therefore the findings would have an implication of associating oppressive political regimes with bad practices of journalism even by journalists with integrity and good values.

Practical Implication

The practical implication of this research can be categorized in to three.

- 1 recognition of Ethiopian journalists' values
- 2 development of mechanisms based on the journalists mind set
- 3 avoiding barriers for better journalism

The starting point to improve journalism practices in Ethiopia for stakeholders of the media sector should be from the recognition of Ethiopian journalists' commitment and knowledge about ethical values and principles. This research proved that Ethiopian journalists do care about ethical practices and hold values and principles which are even considered to be universally applicable tenets and ideals of journalism. Therefore it would be a better approach to realize the fact and recognize the journalists' knowledge and commitment for ethics. This would help base the starting point of any moves forward. On the one hand it creates common understanding and develops further cooperation among stake holders

The second practical implication of this paper emanates from the findings that indicated approaches followed by Ethiopian journalists to achieve ethics. The following two factors

describe the approaches to ethics. One is a problem and the second one is a value system that helps base solutions

1 lack of institutionalized systems of achieving ethics

2 virtue oriented ethical approach

Pertaining to lack of institutionalized systems we can talk about ethical codes at an institution, regional and national level. Since it has been a long standing tradition and mechanism of ensuring self regulatory practices of ethical journalism around the world, Ethiopia should find a way to improve its application. The existing trend on the bases of these research findings is to too much focus on common sense practices and too less usage of codes of conducts. Research works done before have also confirmed to be the case. Therefore practical measures should be taken to institutionalize ethical values and principles at an individual institution, regional and national levels. The establishment of press councils should also be contributing to a great extent to further improve ethical journalism through self regulatory mechanism which goes with the already established values and principles in the Ethiopian journalists mind set. This would lead us to the second point of practical implications of this research.

In the second point, the highlight will be on the virtue oriented approach to ethics. In the process of institutionalizing values and principles the most important point stakeholders who might be responsible for developing the system would be conceptualizing the contents of the codes of conducts and/or ethical guidelines within the framework of virtue oriented ethical approaches. This is to mean that trying to develop a system that bases on dos and don'ts or giving priority to rules and regulations and trying to control violations of ethical values and principles on merely the bases of rules would not fit the existing mindset of Ethiopian journalists. The framework should be developing a system which gives biggest role for individuals to come up with virtuous personalities that would enjoy the privilege of flexible decisions on justifiable logical bases.

Conclusion

Ethiopian Journalism has been criticized for its unethical and irresponsible practices for long time now. Reviews made on the literature have also confirmed, as it was discussed in chapter one of this paper, that Ethiopian journalism is flooded by unethical practices. The government media has an obvious reason of why it continues to be unethical. Ethiopian government media has always been mouth piece of the ruling classes for a long time. Over the last three decades it has been in the hands of two regimes and still remained to be serving the people in power.

The private media on the other hand has a relative advantage of working independently. Apart from other factors that could influence its practices, the private press is not owned and run by the ruling class. However it has been also criticized for its unethical and irresponsible practices as it is the case with the government media. It tends to be a bit controversial to justify why the private media is always accused of being unethical to the extent the case is with the government media when seen in the context of its relative independence. The major objective of this research was to figure out the values and principles of Ethiopian journalists with a special focus on this group including the new entry to the profession online journalism by Ethiopians. Identifying their values and principles would help take the first step in order to understand the why of their unethical performance in journalism. On the other hand it would help frame mechanisms that could possibly be developed to give effect to a better ethical practice of journalism in the nation..

The following research questions were addressed in this research project in order to have a complete picture on the above stated objectives;

- 1 What are the Ethiopian journalists' values and principles and their approaches to ethics?
- 2 What are the instruments used by Ethiopian Journalists to achieve ethical journalism?
- 3 How do they describe the current ethical practices of journalism in Ethiopia?
- 4 What are the factors that are influencing journalism ethics in Ethiopia?
- 5 How do the political environments in Ethiopia influence ethical considerations and professional obligations of the daily practices of journalism in the country?
- 6 Where do the journalists think their values and ethical thoughts come from or how does it develop?

In conclusion it could be said that the three methods involved, the in depth interview, the survey and the Defining Issues Test (DIT) informed case analyses of ethical dilemma, have all confirmed that Ethiopian journalists' hold ethical values and principles which are considered to be universal ideals of journalism ethics. In other words the Ethiopian journalists, both working for the traditional press and the online based news journalism websites, hold values and principles which are quite similar with the western libertarian view oriented journalism ethical values. These values included seeking the truth and reporting it, minimizing harm from their

coverage, maintaining independence in their professional tasks and remain to be accountable for their works. Ethiopian journalists hold these values with all forms of their manifestations. For instance their value related to seeking the truth and reporting it included its manifestations like accuracy, balance, proper representation of facts and contexts and avoiding undercover means of news gathering . When it comes to minimizing harm in their coverage, they do also possess its manifestations like compassion for those who may be affected by their coverage, sensitivity to their community, culture and respect to privacy. Ethiopian journalists do hold also values like avoiding conflicts of interests, distancing themselves from associations and activities that could compromise their integrity and so on as part of manifestations for maintaining independence. They do also believe in the idea to involve the public in their work as a way of correcting unethical practices and in the importance of being ready to correct their mistakes openly so that their profession earns the highest status from the public.

These findings challenged the ideas forwarded by researchers like Ebo (1994) who argued that African Journalists are faced with ethical dilemma coming from conflicts between professional obligation informed by the libertarian view and the socio political environment. The Ethiopian journalists proved that they are not faced with any sort of dilemma in their professional obligations and in what they hold as values. They insist to values they already hold and turned out to be similar with the universally advocated cannons of journalism ideals.

Regarding the problem of ethics with the private media in Ethiopia, it would be argued that it never came from the journalists' ignorance. It should not also be associated with absence of values and principles among the journalists because the opposite is proved to be true in this research. It is now possible to start from recognizing the journalists' values and principles and continue to use them as a base for developing mechanisms that would give effect to ethical practices of journalism. The following sections contain concluding paragraphs of the ethical approaches to journalism ethics, instruments used to achieve ethics and the major factors influencing journalism ethics in the country's private media.

The findings and the analyses of this research would lead to a conclusion that virtue oriented approach to ethics describes Ethiopian Journalists approach to ethics. Many of the private media journalists in the country interpret and make use of their values and principles on case by case bases. They have been witnessed in using the same value in a different way depending on the context and their individual way of reasoning. Therefore it can be concluded that neither a strict application of rules nor a strict consideration of consequences which can be caused by journalism products governed the mind set of Ethiopian journalists' ethical decisions in their day to day activity.

One of the basic reasons for the plentiful unethical practices in the Ethiopian private media, though its journalists hold values and principles with a universally recognized ideals of journalism and do recognize its significance to their profession and show their commitment to achieve it, is lack of institutionalizing values and principles in a way that could help give effect

to journalism ethics in the country. It could be concluded from this research findings that Ethiopian journalists are far behind using a self regulatory mechanisms unlike many other countries around the world. It could be argued that the journalists mere dependence on their common sense, might be good to use the term ‘good sense’ as Breit(2004) used it just to show that some sort of deeper thinking is involved in it, does not take far in resolving ethical problems of the sector. It is not by itself a problem to capitalize on ones “good sense’ in resolving ethical issues. However it would be important to institutionalize ethical values and principles to further strengthen ethical performances. It may be to follow suit other’s experience and start developing codes of conducts at an institution, regional and national level that could guide ethical journalism across the nation including the online media Industry. There are good starts in very few media outlets to develop codes of conducts of their own but generally speaking there remains a lot to be done. The important conclusion to be made from this research project is that the self regulatory system in the Ethiopian journalism is almost nonexistent and highly dependent on individual journalists’ common sense or ‘good sense’ as it can be better termed. The reasons for this and for that matter for the major problems of unethical journalism in Ethiopia; however, emanates from the political environment of the country. The environment is taking the focus of journalists and their institutions’ attention to merely be on how to deal with the restrictive laws and other forms of pressures. Therefore the time and the energy to look inside and develop on their values to achieve their professional obligations would be spent somewhere else. On the other hand the political environment is discouraging to any effort to the establishment of an independent regional and/or national media council with an objective of independent self regulation mechanism. Many journalists do believe that there is a political interference in making sure an independent media council does not exist in the country. It should be noted that respect and authority for self regulating mechanisms are significant in order for them to give effect to ethical journalism. Herrscher.A (2004) stressed the following three points to be relevant for self regulation mechanisms that contain codes of conducts of ethical journalism:

1. The degree to which the rules themselves are seen as representing standards the profession considers ethically valuable
2. The prestige, independence, and representativity of the body that discusses, writes and approves the code and its individual members
3. The prestige, independence, and representativity of the organ and individuals entrusted with the application of the code in concrete cases.

The political environment is affecting not only self regulatory mechanisms but also the ethical performance of journalists in their every day activity. Its impact is both direct and indirect. The direct impacts could mainly be associated with the country’s laws concerning freedom of expression in general and press freedom in particular. Many of the journalists specifically the private domestic media journalists are working under the pressure of tension and fear that these laws imposed on them. These fear and tension as a result is affecting their ethical and

professional performances. The journalists would be forced to compromise some of their values and principles and do seem to intentionally involving in unethical practices. The manifestations for such impacts would be ignorance of major misdeeds of the government. These journalists believe and hold as value to reveal the truth and serve the society in exposing wrongdoings of the people in power. However fear of the laws is making them shy of such stories and in the end would lead them to be unethical.

The other factor contributing to unethical journalism within the context of political environment is lack of access to information. This factor has got a serious impact on both the private domestic media and the online journalism by journalists based outside of Ethiopia. The influence manifested itself in the abundance of one sided unbalanced stories and coverage of unverified distorted facts in various media outlets. It has become almost a trend to see reports only containing one side of the story with total avoidance of what the others has to say. Lack of access to information has a lot to do with this problem. In the first place when journalists find it hard to get information from the other party mainly from the government, they would be forced to work with what they have. Specially when it is a deliberate denial of access that is blocking them the information as the case is between Ethiopian government and the private media sector, both Domestic and Diaspora based, they would be even more tempted to use one side of the story. When such problem persists for a long period of time it would be taken for granted and become a trend to ignore the other side. This even goes further and might lead to the antagonistic relationship between the people in power and the private media journalists which can only worsens the problem and aggravated unethical journalism. Abiy Teklemariam's managing Editor of Addis Neger newspaper, which stopped publication few months ago and transfer its medium into the cyber space, expressed his concern in achieving ethical values and principles in the face of the growing antagonistic relationship between the government and the private media. He questions what the role of Ethiopian journalists supposed to be in such an environment. He expressed his concern by asking 'is the Ethiopian journalism working for self defense or counter attacking the government'. Many journalists do also share his concerns.

Appendices

Survey Questionnaire and the Case Stories

Return to: E-mail: hailemarkosa@yahoo.com

Or a0749672@univie.ac.at

My name is Hailemarkos Ayalew. I am currently studying journalism at the University of Vienna, Austria. I prepared this questionnaire in order to gather the important data for my research project under the theme journalism ethics in Ethiopia. This questionnaire is distributed to every Ethiopian journalist in the country and abroad with the aim that it helps get a better understanding of journalism ethics in Ethiopia.

It could take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your cooperation will assist me to complete my research project successfully and it can be of an important contribution for better development of journalism practices in the country.

Your participation and honest response is of great help for the successful completion of my research project.

If you have any questions, concerns or recommendations, you may contact me through my e-mail: hailemarkosa@yahoo.com. You can also call me at 0043-699-11272016 in Vienna, Austria. I think you will find this survey worthy of your time.

Thank you so much in advance

Part I

This part of the questionnaire contains questions of your ‘Personal Profile’ just to ensure that I have managed to get responses from a good cross-section of journalists. But no names or any other identifying information is required.

Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

Which age group do you belong to?

☐ 15 - 18 years ☐ 19 - 29 years ☐ 30 - 39 years ☐ 40 - 49 years
☐ 50 - 59 years ☐ 60 - 69 years ☐ 70 - 79 years ☐ Over 80 years old

Where do you live?

☐ Ethiopia ☐ Africa ☐ Europe ☐ America (USA) ☐ Asia ☐ Australia

Educational background

☐ High school graduate ☐ College diploma ☐ First Degree
☐ Masters Degree ☐ Doctoral Degree Others

Journalism Trainings

☐ Less than 3 months short term training/s ☐ Between 3 months and 1 year
☐ 1 to 2 years trainings ☐ College Diploma
☐ First Degree ☐ Masters Degree
☐ Doctoral Degree ☐ no training at all

Have you ever taken a training specifically organized for journalism ethics?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Relationships

- ☐ Single ☐ In a relationship / married ☐ Separated / divorced
- ☐ Widowed

How many children/step children do you have?_____

Would you see yourself as belonging to...?

- ☐ The Orthodox Christian ☐ The Catholic Christian ☐ Other religious group
- ☐ The Protestant Christian ☐ The Muslim community ☐ No religion at all

Experience in journalism

- ☐ Less than 5 years ☐ 5 to 10 years ☐ 11 to 15 years ☐ more than 15 years

Position at the moment

- ☐ Senior manager (e.g. editor in chief, managing editor)
- ☐ Junior manager (e.g. desk head, department head, sub-editor, senior editor)
- ☐ Non-management staff (e.g. reporter, senior reporter)
- ☐ Freelancer, stringer, correspondent
- ☐ Others

Which of the following media you are working for?

- ☐ Ethiopian Government media ☐ Ethiopian private media
- ☐ International media ☐ For Ethiopia, Africa and /or International media
- ☐ African media

To which type of media you are working for?

- ☐ Newspaper ☐ Magazine ☐ Radio ☐ TV ☐ online web

☐ For print, broadcast media and/or online web

What is your term of employment?

☐ Full time ☐ Part-time ☐ Freelancer ☐ Other

Besides working as a journalist, do you have other paid jobs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you affiliated to any political party?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Which of the following topics you are mainly working on?

☐ Politics ☐ Economy and business issues ☐ Social issues ☐ every issue

Part II

1. The following statements describe different approaches to news coverage. Would you please tell me on the given scales the extent to which you agree or disagree with the list of statements given in the table below? Put a \surd mark on the box of your choice

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Some what disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
I do not allow my own beliefs and convictions to influence my reporting.						
I believe analysis of events and issues in my work are important. Facts alone are not enough I think that facts speak for themselves						
I remain strictly impartial in my work						
I report my stories only if they are substantiated by hard evidence and reliable sources. I think that journalists can depict reality as it is						

I always stay away from information that cannot be verified.						
I believe there are ethical principles which are so important that they should be followed by all journalists, regardless of situation and context.						
Ethical dilemmas in news coverage are often so complex that journalists should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes of conduct.						
Reporting and publishing a story that can potentially harm others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained.						
There are situations where harm is justifiable if it results in a story that produces a greater good.						

2. What is the most important role of journalism in Ethiopia for you?

3. Do you care for ethical values and principles before you report or publish your news?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer is 'yes' how frequently do you use the following instruments to check your stories ethicality?

	Always	Very often	sometimes	rarely	Never
Ethical codes and editorial policy of your organization, the media you are working for					
ethical codes of journalists' associations					
the country's law on media					
Consulting colleagues and friends					

Consulting respected journalists I know from anywhere					
Discussing with my editor					
my common sense and general knowledge					

Would you tell me instruments which you mostly use to check on your stories ethicality other than listed in the above table? _____

- 4. Here are statements related to your profession. Would you please tell me on the given scales the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
In my work place, I have a lot of control over the work that I do. There is limited or no interference in my work						
I am allowed to take part in decisions that affects my work.						
It is okay to pay to a source for a crucial information if it is the only way of getting the information						
It is okay to accept a gift from a source						
In order to get a crucial information it is okay to pretend to be someone else but not a journalist						
I record secretly if I think it is the only way to get the information						

I think journalists need a written guide book of ethical standards that they follow						
My organization is sensitive about offending officials, advertisers and readers						
I tolerate my bosses decisions to force me do a story that I think is unethical as long as I do not get a better place to work						
In times of war or any event that requires my patriotic intervention for my country, truth telling could be compromised						
In order to get an important information from a certain firm, I believe it is okay getting employed in that firm to get inside story						
Putting pressure on unwilling informants to get a story is the right thing to do, if it is the only way to get crucial information for my story						

5. If you think there are journalism ethical values and/or principles that should never be violated under any conditions or circumstances, please write them in the space below.

7. What do you think should be the most important ethical values and principles for the current journalism practices in Ethiopia?

8. The following table contains lists of factors that influence people’s behaviour in relation to ethical values and attitudes. Which of the factors among the lists given below are influential sources for your own behavior on moral values and attitudes?

Statement	Extremely influential	Very influential	influential	Little influential	Not influential at all	Undecided
Parents (early home life)						
My Colleagues behavior						
Religious upbringing						
My political stand						
Current family life						
Journalistic experience						
Journalism courses						
Educational background						
Non-colleagues behavior (Friends, relatives or any other person or group of people who are not your colleagues)						

9. What do you think is the most influential factor for your behavior on moral and ethical matters?

10. Do you think that the ethical problems listed in the table below exist in the Ethiopian private press? Please indicate your level of agreement.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
Lack of Reporting Accurately / Factually						
Sensationalism						
News not relevant enough / Out of touch						
Lack of depth / context						
Lack of objectivity / Balanced stories						
Lack investigative journalism / Watchdog role						
Lack of restraint / Not selective in coverage						
Lack of public trust						
Confusion between opinion & reporting						
Arrogance						
Lack of analysis / What's behind the news						
Lack of Relevance to important issues						
Lack of Diversity of views/ Wide range of perspectives						

11. What would you say is the most important problem the Ethiopian Private Media in general is having on its content?

12. What would you say is the most important problem the Ethiopian Government Media in general is facing these days in its content?

13. The following statements are referring to the legal and political environment of journalism practices in Ethiopia. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements.

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
The press law of the country creates discomfort on my job						
I have a fair access to government offices, documents and databases whenever I want						
I feel that fear of punishment from government accusations of my stories are negatively affecting my daily job.						
I have a fair access for government politicians whenever I want information						
I am confident that I have a legal protection in my professional activity						
I have a fair access to government meetings at any level(from parliament members sessions to committee level hearings and judicial and executive proceedings)						
Logistical or cost considerations are creating obstacles for me to exercise the right of access to information from public offices						

Reasons of national security and public health are used by government offices to deny journalists demand for information.						
The political and legal environment in the country, in general terms, is not conducive for ethical practices of journalism.						

15. The following four cases are adopted from real situations where journalists were faced with ethical dilemmas in their practice of journalism. Would you please read the stories presented in each case and try to give your answers for the questions that follow?

Case 1

Freelance photographer Gregory Marinovich captured the prize-winning photos in Soweto on September 15, as a mob savagely murdered a man suspected of being a spy. In all, six photographs were made available by the Associated Press: the suspected spy being led from a train station by five men, dragged down the street, beaten, stoned, stabbed and, ultimately, doused with gasoline and set afire.

Do you publish or broadcast the picture?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Could you please write in your own words the reason why you decide to either report it or not?

To what extent do you think the following factors are important to come to your decision for the above case?

	Extremely important	Very important	important	Little important	Not important at all	Undecided
The photo will offend readers						
Such kind of photos will be a lesson for the society to learn from them and work to change them						
The public should face and know the truth and it has its own way of using it for the better						
News worthiness is enough reason to publish or broadcast it						

Case 2

A prominent figure in the politics of your country has told you a story about a senior person from his own party that could damage the credibility of the person in the eyes of the general public. The story accuses the person of conspiring against the interest of the party and their huge numbers of supporters in the country. You tend to believe the source and you have clues that it might be true. But you do not have the evidence to prove it. The source has given you the story under condition of anonymity.

Do you report it as news, without attaching the name of the source or not?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you please write briefly in your own words why you decided to either report it or not?

Rate the following factors according to their level of importance for you to reach to the choice you made between Yes and No based on the above story.

	Extremely important	Very important	important	Little important	Not important at all	Undecided
I have to take care of the damage it can cause on the image of the accused and need to have my own evidence						
Writing as it is does not really matter as long as the person can prove it wrong one day or the other. It is a difficult and tiresome task to disprove false accusations; therefore I have to have the evidence before I decide to put the accused in a difficult task of proving his innocence and gain his image back. The public has the right to know everything regardless of it is fact or fiction without an evidence or verification of the facts there should not be any excuse to report a story						
after all if I can believe the source that is enough evidence						
if it includes what the accused has to say then it does not really matter						
would reporting it does serve any public interest, if so no problem to report it						

Case 3

The reporter in her coverage of election stories have learnt that one of the prominent politicians running for the prime minister position of the government was involved in a crime that killed three people twenty five years ago. The crime was done with the knowledge of the then government that it was a fight against ethnically fanatic groups. It was also believed that it was in the national interest of the country. If the reporter writes the story and reveals its name, the person's life will be at risk from the fanatic groups. And the reporter proved from different sources that his life will be at risk if the story is out.

If you were in place of this reporter would you report the story or not?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you please write briefly in your own words why you decided to either report it or not?

Rate the following factors according to their level of importance for you to reach to the choice you made between Yes and No based on the above story.

Statement	Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Little important	Not Important at all	Do not know
It was responsibility of the mass media to make sure the voters know about the characters and background of the politicians running to govern the country						
We should recognize that the person has a new life and proved it for long therefore no need to focus on his past						
Facts do not harm anyone therefore the fact should be told at any condition Because of the timing ,election, the person may not have enough time to explain and renew his image therefore even if it should be reported but it must be sometime after the election is over						
Before reporting the story I should know the impact of it on the fairness of election process.						
The newspaper could be accused of knowing relevant facts about a candidate and keeping them secret. Therefore it should be reported The story would be covered by others when they get it anyways, therefore no sense to hide it now.						
Good to talk to the person and tell him to withdraw from running and if he agrees not publishing the story would be a better option						

16. To what extent the factors listed below affect your day to day activities of journalism, especially in your ethical decisions?

Statement	Extremely influential	Very Influential	Influential	Little Influential	Not influential at all	undecided
Your friends, and family						
Shortage of news gathering instruments and other resources						
What your readers or viewers might want even though you may not believe your story to be ethical						
Competing news organizations						
Censorship and/or self-Censorship						
Advertising considerations						
Government officials						
Politicians						
Business people						
Pressing news deadlines						
Your supervisors and higher editors						
Journalism professional ethical codes and values						
Your peers on the staff						

Professional organizations such as journalism unions and/or media watch orgs						
Sensibilities of the community covered						
Your political and/or Religious affiliation						
Media laws in the country						

17. Could you please tell me the most influential factors you think is affecting journalist's ethical behavior in Ethiopia?

18. What do you think should be the most important role of journalism in Ethiopia?

THANK YOU

Interview Protocol

The following interview protocol is adopted from Brecken, C. S (2006, 229)

- 1) What do you consider to be your “cultural” background? (E.g. where did you have your life’s most formative experiences, etc.)
- 2) How did you become a journalist, do u have any training or...what? If so, what do you think was its aim?
- 3) What are the 3 most recent stories you’ve reported? Why did you choose them?
- 4) How do you go about choosing feature stories to report? What are the processes before the final story get published
- 5) Who benefits most from your work? How?
- 6) What do you consider to be “effectiveness” in your work? How do you achieve this effectiveness?
- 7) Do you have any particular role models in this field?
- 8) What other networks or news sources do you most respect in this field? Why?
- 9) If you were to describe the style or “flavor” of the stories you write, how would you describe it? If your reporting were a food, what would it be?
- 10) Do you think your background culture affects the style/flavor of your stories?
- 11) How does the style/flavor you strive for compare to that of other journalists or news organizations?
- 12) What do you know about the composition of your audience? When you broadcast, whom do you imagine broadcasting to?
- 13) What kind of stories do you think your target audience prefers? What gives you this impression?
- 14) How does your target audience differ from other audiences around the world?

- 15) What kind of interactions do you have with your reporters?
- 16) How does your place in your organization affect your work?
- 17) What does “propaganda” mean to you? Does your organization produce it?

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Abstract

This paper investigated values and principles which are governing journalism practices in Ethiopia. The major objective of this project is to figure out where the exact problem lies in terms of giving effect to responsible and ethical practices of journalism ethics in the nation.

The domestic private press and the online journalism which is done from abroad are subjects of the study. Grounded theory approach informed the data gathering and analyses procedures. Survey of journalists' views and perceptions, in depth interviews and Defining Issues Test (DIT) informed case analyses of ethical dilemma are the major tools used.

The current trend in the country's journalism, both private and state owned press, is characterized by authoritarian theory of the press. The trend is extending the theory's long time association of press contents' control by the ruling class to those with no political power which is used as a major tool to control contents. This situation is fuelling the plentiful unethical practices of journalism in the nation

This research project revealed that the concept of cultural relativism in terms of ethical values and principles in journalism practices is simply hiding the fact on the ground. It was founded out that Ethiopian journalists hold values and principles quite similar with the universally advocated canons of journalism ethics. The findings challenged the concept of cultural relativism which might hinder adoption of a universally applicable ethical values and principles of journalism.

There are two basic reasons for the plentiful unethical practices in the country's journalism, though its journalists hold values and principles with universally recognized ideals of journalism and do recognize its significance to their profession and show their commitment to achieve it. The first one is lack of institutionalizing values and principles in a way that could help give effect to journalism ethics in the country. The second one is the impact of the political environment in controlling the focus and attention of the journalists to be merely on a counter attack position against the political landscape in the nation. A wide spread application of common sense, as some call it 'good sense' in the daily choice and decisions of contents to be covered is resulting in a less focus to institutionalize values and principles.

In the final analyses it could be concluded that Ethiopian journalism is ignoring the public and by default fall far short of its major professional values and standards. It is merely focusing on serving one's own interest which is potentially eroding the credibility of the profession and losing its unique advantage of significantly assisting the nation's need to be a better place for its citizens. And all the media sectors, be it government owned, private or the online media are victims of this trend. Virtue ethics oriented self regulatory mechanisms which capitalize on individual journalists' character and liberal political environment would be at the core of the solutions to give effect for the betterment of responsible journalism in the nation.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Dissertation untersucht Werte und Prinzipien, die die journalistische Praxis in Äthiopien beherrschen. Das Hauptziel dieser Arbeit liegt darin, die Barrieren zu identifizieren, die einer verantwortlichen und ethischen journalistischen Praxis in Äthiopien im Weg stehen.

Die heimische private Presse und der Onlinejournalismus, der im Ausland produziert wird, sind die Forschungsgegenstände dieses Projektes. Der Grounded-Theory-Ansatz liefert die Grundlage zur Datenerhebung und -analyse. Zu den hiesigen wichtigsten Werkzeugen zur Analyse des ethischen Dilemmas zählen sowohl die in ausführlichen Interviews durchgeführte Befragung von Journalisten über ihre Ansichten und Wahrnehmungen als auch der Defining-Issues-Test (DIT).

Die aktuelle Tendenz im äthiopischen Journalismus – das gilt für private wie auch für staatliche geführte Medien – kann mit den autoritären Medientheorien beschrieben werden. Allerdings wird die in autoritären Mediensystemen übliche Annahme, die Kontrolle der Medieninhalte liege in der Hand der Regierenden, auf diejenigen ausgeweitet, die zwar keine politische Macht besitzen, sich jedoch der Medien bedienen, um Kontrolle über Inhalte auszuüben. Diese Situation fördert die flächendeckend unethischen Praktiken des Journalismus im Land.

Dieses Forschungsprojekt brachte hervor, dass das Konzept des Kulturrelativismus bezüglich Werte und Prinzipien der journalistischen Praktik einfach Tatsachen verkennt. Vielmehr konnte hier gezeigt werden, dass äthiopische Journalisten sich mit ähnlichen Werten und Prinzipien wie die in den universal vorgeschlagenen Vorschriften der journalistischen Ethik bewandert sind. Die Forschungsergebnisse stellen daher Konzepte des Kulturrelativismus, die gegen den Einsatz universell einsetzbare Werte und Prinzipien eintreten, in Frage.

Zwei Hauptgründe für die unethischen journalistischen Praktiken im Äthiopien – obwohl äthiopische Journalisten die universalgeltende Ideale journalistischer Werte und Prinzipien kennen, deren Bedeutung für ihren Berufsstand bewusst sind und außerdem für die Erfüllung dieser Prinzipien Engagement zeigen – konnte diese Arbeit ausmachen: Erstens fehlt eine Institutionalisierung der Werte und Prinzipien, die dem ethischen journalistischen Praxis im Land diesbezüglich begünstigen könnte. Zweitens üben die bestehenden politischen Rahmenbedingungen großen Einfluss auf die Aufmerksamkeit der Journalisten, die sich dann lediglich auf Angriffen gegen die politische Situation im Land konzentrieren. Die weitverbreitete Anwendung der sogenannten Vernunft, manche nennen es „gesunder Menschenverstand“, in der täglichen Auswahl und den anhaltenden Entscheidungen über Inhalte, die veröffentlicht werden sollen, lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit von der Institutionalisierung der Werte und Prinzipien ab.

In der abschließenden Analyse konnte also festgestellt werden, dass der äthiopische Journalismus die Öffentlichkeit ignoriert und regelmäßig seine eigenen Werte und Prinzipien verfehlt. Er fokussiert hauptsächlich auf die Durchbringung der eigenen Interessen – dadurch fördert er potentiell eine Diskreditierung des Berufsstandes und verliert seine bevorzugte Position als Unterstützer der Nation in ihrem Bemühen einen besseren Ort für deren Bürger zu sein. Alle

Medienbereiche sind gleichermaßen Opfer dieses Trends, seien sie staatlich, privat oder online. Selbstregulierende Mechanismen, auf Tugendethik orientiert, die auf den Charakter einzelner Journalisten und auf eine liberale politische Umwelt fokussieren, könnten die Quelle zu Lösungen für die Erschaffung eines verantwortungsvollen Journalismus in Äthiopien.

RESUME

I. PERSONAL DETAIL

Name	Worke Hailemarkos Ayalew
Sex	Male
Date of Birth	December 31 st 1975
Place of Birth	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Marital Status	Married
Nationality	Ethiopian

II. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- 2008-2011 Doctoral student at the university of Vienna
- Master of Arts in Journalism and Communications,
Addis Ababa University – **May 2006**

Thesis title: “News bias in the Ethiopian press during the 2005 election”

- B.Ed Degree in Foreign Language and Literature (Kotebe College of Teachers Education, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) – **June 2002** (graduated with distinction)

Senior essay title: “The extent to which authentic materials are used in teaching English in Ethiopian private high schools”

Certificates

- In **REPORTING SKILLS** (British Council Addis Ababa Ethiopia)
July to August 2001
- In **RADIO PROGRAMMING** (Fana Broadcasting Corporation, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
October 2001 to November 2002
- In **MEDIA IN KENYA** (United States International University, Nairobi Kenya)
August, 2005
- In **TRAINING OF TRAINERS IN TEACHING METHODOLOGY** (Kotebe Teachers College, Addis Ababa Ethiopia) **December 1998 to January 1999**

III. Work Experience and Professional Activities

Journalism

- Program Producer and Deputy editor in chief of the news room in Fana Broadcasting Corporation Addis Ababa Ethiopia, **2001-2004**

- Did my MA internship at the BBC Africa Service
(Mohammed Addo, former BBC correspondent, was my supervisor. **September, 2005**)

- Presented my research work on the mass media and higher education in Ethiopia at the Private Higher education institutions' annual academic conference held at the Economic Commission for Africa hall. **August 2006.**

- Presented my research work on "News Bias in the Ethiopian Press" at the Nordic Media Conference held in Aalborg, Denmark on **August, 2005**

(This paper was selected by the Graduate School of Journalism and Communications, Addis Ababa University and Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communications, Kristinsand, Norway (GSJC) to attend the conference)

- Assistant researcher on "HIV/AIDS Coverage by the Ethiopian Media"

Conducted by Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS) and Addis Ababa University in the year **2005**

- Assistant researcher on "Monitoring the media coverage of the 2005 Ethiopian national election".**2005**

- News Reporter in the first private daily newspaper of Ethiopia
"ELETAWI ADDIS" for 5 months, **2001**

Teaching

- English Language Instructor and department head for the languages department in St.Mary's University College, **2004-2007**
- Part time English Language Instructor in HAMMCO TEC Institute for two years, **2002-2004**